



The North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System Psychology Internship Program

Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center
1601 SW Archer Road
Gainesville, Florida 32608-1197
(352) 548-6020

[Psychology Training Program | VA North Florida/South Georgia Health Care | Veterans Affairs](#)

APPIC Match Numbers:
General Internship: 120711
Geropsychology Internship: 120712
Application due date: November 6, 2022

What we want you to know about us

The required and helpful information about our site is contained below, and is important to consider for your internship year. Our service and our training program frequently operate from a trauma-informed perspective. Many sites have rotations that provide experiences in working with individuals who have suffered trauma; and what sets our training program apart is that our trauma-informed and trauma-responsive perspective is pervasive in our internship and is included in most of our rotations, in group supervision, and in our didactic presentations. Our goal is for this perspective to inform your thinking in general clinical work, and your continued development of theoretical and conceptual competencies.

*This document may contain links to sites external to Department of Veterans Affairs.
VA does not endorse and is not responsible for the content of the external linked websites.*

There are also many training programs that stress the importance of measurement-based care and evidenced-based treatment and assessment. Our program embraces these concepts, and also recognizes there is a difference between empirically standardized treatment and evidenced-based treatment. We want our trainees to learn specific, validated interventions, as well as how to utilize these practices and best apply them to the individual patients with whom they work. To that end, we emphasize the content and process of psychotherapy, the interpersonal role of the individual providing the interventions, and the science behind and importance of case conceptualization. Our training opportunities are designed to give our interns the opportunity to integrate the “heart and head” of psychology practice; an integration we believe leads to improved clinical outcomes, better insight into psychological processes that lead to change, and increased satisfaction with clinical work.

We believe the internship year is critical in transitioning trainees from the sprint pace of undergraduate and graduate programs, to the marathon pace of practicing psychology. In our experience, this change of pace is often overlooked, and is essential to maintain passion and energy for the duration of one’s career. We emphasize work-life balance in our program because we believe being a psychologist is what you do and not who you are, although we realize who you are informs what you do. We encourage our interns to be at work on time and work hard, and at the end of the workday be with friends and family enjoying life.

More than anything else, we want you to know we are committed, passionate, and excited about our program and about training psychologists. None of the psychologists in our healthcare system are required to supervise, they volunteer because of their commitment to training. Our brochure provides information for you; however, this information does not describe the heart of our program or our staff, which is the truly special part of our program. To witness that, you will need to apply, and we hope to show you during interviews. We wish you the best in your application process and thank you for considering our site.

Accreditation Status

The psychology internship program at the **North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System** is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association. The next site visit will be during the Fall of **2023** or Winter of **2024**.



Application & Selection Procedures

The North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System Psychology Training Program offers APA-accredited internships to U.S. citizens pursuing a doctoral degree in clinical or counseling psychology from an APA, CPA, or PCASAS accredited institution. To be considered, students must demonstrate completion of at least three years of graduate course work, a minimum of 520 direct contact hours (combined assessment and intervention hours), and 5 completed integrated psychological assessments. Applicants must be certified as ready for internship by their Director of Training. Completed internship applications are reviewed by the Psychology Selection Committee and must be received no later than **November 6, 2022**.

The North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System is using the uniform APPIC Application for Psychology Internship (AAPI). This form is available on the APPIC website. Applications will need to include the following:

- Cover letter that indicates areas of interest, and if you know, staff with whom you might be interested in working;
- APPIC Application for Psychology Internship (AAPI);
- Three (3) letters of recommendation;
- Graduate transcripts; and
- A curriculum vita.

****Please indicate in your cover letter if you are applying for our GENERAL TRACK, GEROPSYCHOLOGY TRACK, AND/OR BOTH TRACKS.***

Although applications will be accepted until November 6, 2022, applicants are encouraged to complete their applications as early as possible. Applications are reviewed by a committee of supervisory psychologists to select applicants for interviews. We typically interview approximately half of all applicants. We inform all applicants of their interview status by e-mail, so please make sure to give us your correct e-mail address. Once all selected applicants are interviewed, the training committee meets to generate our match lists. We will inform applicants of their interview status by late November 2022 or early December 2022. Intern applicants are selected for interviews based upon ratings of the following criteria: quality of academic preparation, quality of intervention experience, quality of assessment experience, quality of letters of recommendation, quality of essays and cover letter, diversity awareness, and the overall match to our internship program. Interviewed applicants are further rated on their demonstrated competency in responding to questions, overall goodness of fit, and interpersonal style, presentation, and behavior.

Interview dates will be four days in January 2023. At the time of writing this brochure, we are planning on having virtual interviews only. Interviews will be on 1/6/2023, 1/9/2023, 1/12/2023 and 1/17/2023. If essential, we will add a fifth interview date of 1/19/2023. Unfortunately, because of the substantial number of applicants and interviews, the dates and times will not be flexible and interviews will span up to a full day. Prospective interns will receive an interview schedule by email and if interviewing virtually, a link for the virtual interview. We do our best to match intern applicants with their training interests, but also recognize your training interests change over time, particularly during internship year.

The APPIC Board of Directors has identified principles that should be utilized as training programs develop their own recruitment practices, as well as a non-exhaustive list of virtual interviewing “Dos and Don’ts,” which can be accessed as follows: <https://www.appic.org/Portals/0/Website%20docs/APPICs%20Virtual%20Interviewing%20Tip%20Sheet.pdf>.

The North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System adheres to all Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policies. This internship site agrees to abide by the APPIC Policy that no person at this training facility will solicit, accept, or use any ranking-related information from any intern applicant.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) adheres to all Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policies. As a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Health Professions Trainee (HPT), you will receive a Federal appointment, and the following requirements will apply prior to that appointment. **The forms noted below are not required to apply for our internship program but will be required for those interns with whom we match:**

1. **U.S. Citizenship.** HPTs who receive a direct stipend (pay) must be U.S. citizens. Trainees who are not VA paid (without compensation-WOC) who are not U.S. citizens may be appointed and must provide current immigrant, non-immigrant or exchange visitor documents.
2. **U.S. Social Security Number.** All VA appointees must have a U.S. social security number (SSN) prior to beginning the pre-employment, on-boarding process at the VA.

3. **Selective Service Registration.** Federal law requires that most males living in the U.S. between the ages of 18 and 26 register with the Selective Service System. Male, for this purpose, is any individual born male on their birth certificate regardless of current gender. Males required to register, but who did not do so by their 26th birthday, are barred from any position in any Executive Agency. Visit <https://www.sss.gov> to register, print proof of registration or apply for a Status Information Letter.

Further, information is available on the VA Psychology Training website that notes the following (<https://www.psychologytraining.va.gov/docs/Trainee-Eligibility.pdf>)

Male applicants born after 12/31/1959 must have registered for the Selective Service by age 26 to be eligible for U.S. government employment, including selection as a paid or WOC VA trainee. For additional information about the Selective Service System, and to register or to check your registration status visit <https://www.sss.gov/>. Anyone who was required to register but did not register before the age of 26 will need to apply for a Status Information Letter (SIL) and request a waiver. Waiver requests are rare and will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Waiver determinates are made by the VA Office of Human Resources Management and can take six months for a verdict.

4. **Background Investigation.** All HPTs will be fingerprinted and undergo screenings and background investigations. Additional details about the required background checks can be found at the following website: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/10450.html>.
5. **Drug Testing.** Per Executive Order 12564 the VA strives to be a Drug-Free Workplace. HPTs are not drug-tested prior to appointment; however, will be subject to random drug testing throughout the entire VA appointment period. This testing includes for cannabis, even if an HPT has a valid prescription or purchases Delta 8 legally. The federal government still tests for it, and that includes both Delta 8 and Delta 9. You will be asked to sign an acknowledgement form stating you are aware of this practice. See [1400FORM HPT-Testing-Ack2019.pdf \(va.gov\)](#) and [VA Drug-Free Workplace Program Guide for Veterans Health Administration Health Professions Trainees](#).
6. **Affiliation Agreement.** To ensure shared responsibility between an academic program and the VA there must be a current and fully executed Academic Affiliation Agreement on file with the VHA Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA). The affiliation agreement delineates the duties of VA and the affiliated institution. Most APA-accredited doctoral programs have an agreement on file. More information about this document can be found at <http://www.va.gov/oaa/agreements.asp> (see section on psychology internships). Post-degree programs typically will not have an affiliation agreement, as the HPT is no longer enrolled in an academic program and the program is VA sponsored.
7. **TQCVL.** To streamline on-boarding of HPTs, VHA Office of Academic Affiliations requires completion of a Trainee Qualifications and Credentials Verification Letter (TQCVL). An Educational Official at the Affiliate must complete and sign this letter. For post-graduate programs where an affiliate is not the program sponsor, this process must be completed by the VA Training Director. Your VA appointment cannot happen until the TQCVL is submitted

and signed by senior leadership from the VA facility. For more information about this document, please visit <https://www.va.gov/OAA/TQCVL>.

- a. **Health Requirements.** Among other things, the TQCVL confirms that you, the trainee, are fit to perform the essential functions (physical and mental) of the training program and immunized following current Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and VHA policy. This protects you, other employees and patients while working in a healthcare facility. Required are annual tuberculosis screening, Hepatitis B vaccine, annual influenza vaccine, and COVID vaccinations. Declinations are EXTREMELY rare. If you decline the COVID vaccine for medical or religious reasons, you will be required to provide your complete documentation to Occupational Health and submit the VA Form 10-263 by uploading it to LEAF System.

* Health Professions Trainees (HPTs) are appointed as temporary employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs. As such, HPTs are subject to laws, policies, and guidelines posted for VA staff members. There are infrequent times in which this guidance can change during a training year which may create new requirements or responsibilities for HPTs. If employment requirements change during the course of a training year, HPTs will be notified of the change and impact as soon as possible and options provided. The VA Training Director for your profession will provide you with the information you need to understand the requirement and reasons for the requirement in timely manner.

- b. Primary source verification is required for all your prior education and training. Your training directors will be reaching out to the appropriate institutions to get that done and complete.
8. **Additional Forms.** Additional pre-employment forms include the Application for Health Professions Trainees (VA 10-2850D) and the Declaration for Federal Employment (OF 306). These documents and others are available online for review at <https://www.va.gov/oaa/app-forms.asp>. Falsifying any answer on these required Federal documents will result in the inability to appoint or immediate dismissal from the training program.
 9. VA identity proofing requires presentation of two source documents (IDs). Documents must be unexpired and names on both documents must match. For more information visit: https://www.oit.va.gov/programs/piv/_media/docs/IDMatrix.pdf

Additional information regarding eligibility requirements for appointment as a psychology HPT can be found at the end of this brochure. Please following the included link for additional information about program eligibility for VA Psychology Training Programs (<https://www.psychologytraining.va.gov/eligibility.asp>).

The internship at the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System is accredited by the American Psychological Association. Our next site visit will be in **2023** or **2024**.

Inquiries directed to:

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For information regarding APA accreditation of this internship or other accredited internships, please write or call:

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation
American Psychological Association
750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4242
Phone: (202) 336-5979
Fax: (202) 336-5978
E-mail: apaaccred@apa.org



Psychology Setting

The Health Service Psychology at the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System has been continually APA accredited since 1982. We also have an accredited Clinical Psychology postdoctoral residency program with the following emphasis areas (one resident in each area): Geropsychology, Substance Use, and Health Psychology. Characteristically, we also offer practicum level training and have had from 10-20 graduate students from the University of Florida and Florida State University, as well as from other programs during any given year. However, due to the pandemic, we have placed on hold for this level of training. This could change at any time with shifts in the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its treatment recommendations. Currently we have between 80-100 psychologists on staff throughout our medical center's health care system; including three large, multidisciplinary outpatient clinics and seven community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs). Our staff are well represented in all major areas of healthcare provision, as well as serving on a variety of professional committees and boards; oftentimes in leadership positions. Our medical center is affiliated with the University of Florida and Shands Hospital and as such, offers clinical training to a variety of disciplines including medicine, psychiatry, nursing, pharmacy, and social work.

Training Model and Program Philosophy

The Psychology Internship Training Program at the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System follows a practitioner-scholar model. Thus, the primary training focus is on direct clinical work – and that work is informed by evidenced-based practice. It is our belief interns must be exposed to a diversity of patient problems, many different intervention techniques,

multiple theoretical viewpoints, and the relevant scientific literature. Based upon this philosophy, interns receive broad, comprehensive training in preparation for entry-level, generalist practice in professional psychology or geropsychology.

The internship trains students from APA, CPA, or PCASAS accredited graduate programs in clinical and counseling psychology. The broad training in professional psychology interns receive builds upon their graduate education and enhances their professional development as a clinical or counseling psychologist. Although general adult practice is emphasized, the internship retains sufficient flexibility to allow for individual specialty training needs of the intern to be met. The design of the internship program includes a staff representing a wide variety of theoretical orientations informed by the scientific literature. The psychology staff view familiarity with the evolving body of scientific and professional literature in psychology as critical to competence in professional practice. Science is integrated with practice through both didactic lectures and discussions of the empirical literature during supervision.

The Internship Training Program reflects our commitment to generalist preparation and geropsychology for clinical practice through a distribution of experiences spanning assessment, therapy, and consultation. A given intern's individualized program is one that takes into consideration graduate school preparation and practica, planned career direction, intern interests, and APA's Standards of Accreditation in Health Service Psychology. The intern participates in rotation selection and receives advice as needed by the Training Director and, when appropriate, the Training Committee.

VISN 8 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Program

The VISN 8 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) program was developed to (1) provide VISN 8 high quality core DEI training. VISN 8 is defined as the VA Medical Center and Health Care Systems located in Florida, South Georgia, and Puerto Rico. (2) This program hopes to provide individuals at VISN 8 sites assistance on the development of yearly DEI training programs and (3) through a collaborative process, brings together the rich diverse training talent across VISN 8. This program is structured into two main components. First, a VISN-wide virtual DEI training; and second, a quality control measures to assure the program is effective and focused on DEI program improvement.

Each VISN 8 site takes the lead on one core diversity training topic per year, and these virtual presentations will be attended by all VISN 8 Psychology Health Profession Trainees (HPTs). Direct feedback from HPTs will provide data on the usefulness and effectiveness of the program. Utilizing data from these endeavors, the program will be recalibrated to respond to the dynamic changes and evolving DEI training needs of the sites and its HPTs.

Psychology Service Diversity Committee

Our training program celebrates diversity in all of its forms, which is illustrated by the inclusion of diversity in clinical experiences, didactic trainings, professional interactions, and community outreach activities throughout the training year. We have an active Psychology Service Diversity Committee committed to improving educational opportunities for staff and trainees on differences of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, culture, and intellectual perspective; and how these differences impact mental and physical health issues and delivery of care. We believe *cultural humility* is vital to understanding

mental illness and essential to provision of care. As such, VA psychologists are obligated to ensure culturally competent services continually evolve in order to better respond to the needs of our increasingly diverse Veteran population.

Throughout each training year we offer a variety of diversity-related educational opportunities:

- Formal Continuing Education for staff and trainees
- Quarterly journal discussions of recent, scholarly research
- Didactic trainings for Predoctoral Psychology Interns
- A collaborative Predoctoral Intern *Valuing Diversity Project*

Although the medical center serves a predominately adult male population, there is an increasing number of female Veterans in our healthcare system. In 1999, the Women's Health Clinic opened to address the unique medical and mental health needs of female Veterans. Our healthcare system has also seen increases in race/ethnic minority Veterans and LGBTQ+ Veterans using VA facilities. The Psychology Service in particular has developed several groups and outreach programs for minority Veterans, which include the Race-Based Stress and Trauma Empowerment Group, LGBTQ+ Support Group, and Transgender Support Group. For women, we also offer Cognitive Processing Therapy for MST, CBT for Chronic Pain, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and Compassion-Focused Therapy.

Our committee members originate from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, share a commitment that every Veteran receive equitable and clinically validated services in a culturally appropriate manner, and strive to examine minority disparities in physical and mental health care specific to the VA. As a part of the training experience, all trainees will be considered members of the Diversity Committee and will attend quarterly committee meetings to evaluate and improve the current diversity program.

Psychology Service Diversity Committee Members

Ivonne Rodriguez-Santiago, Ph.D., Chair

Andrea Aguilar, Psy.D.

John S. Auerbach, Ph.D.

Elizabeth P. Dizney, Psy.D.

Joseph S. Fineman, Ph.D.

Timothy Ketterson, Ph.D.

Aixa L. Long, Psy.D.

Mattie President, Ph.D.

Mark Register, Ph.D.

Kimberly H. Shaw, Ph.D.

Michelle L. Smith, Ph.D., ABPP

Amy H. Voltmer, Psy.D.

Psychology Predoctoral Intern Valuing Diversity Group Project

Valuing Diversity is, “What institutions and members of a community do to acknowledge the benefits of their differences and similarities. They intentionally work to build sustainable relationships among people and institutions with diverse membership. A community that values

diversity ensures that institutions provide equal treatment and access to resources and decisions for all community members regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, and physical disability” (American Psychological Association, p. 4).

Purpose and goal of the *Valuing Diversity Project*: Highlight a diverse population of Veterans to research and provide education to Psychology staff. The goal is to increase staff awareness of the diverse group of Veterans and ultimately improve the quality of healthcare provided.

Valuing Diversity Project – Objectives

- Identify an important diverse population of Veterans
- Research the diverse population of Veterans
- Create a legacy product as a resource about the diverse population of Veterans that will be left for Psychology Service staff and others
- Evaluate the Outcome - CE presentation to Psychology staff to provide information about the diverse group of Veterans and the legacy product that is created

Program Aims and Profession Wide Competencies

With the implementation of the Standards of Accreditation (SoA) in 2017, accredited programs were given a specific framework to describe the competencies in which trainees are prepared. For doctoral and doctoral internship programs, the profession-wide competencies (PWCs) offer nine (9) broad competency areas in which all trainees must be appropriately trained by the completion of training: <https://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/newsletter/2018/12/competencies>. Our training program strives to provide a coherent series of training experiences that lead interns to develop competencies required to enter the field of professional psychology as a successful psychology resident or early career psychologist. These competencies include the Profession Wide Competencies (PWCs) required by the American Psychological Association’s Commission on Accreditation, <https://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/section-c-soa.pdf>. We believe the primary learning mechanism for competency development is hands on clinical work with patients and interprofessional teams. Training experiences offered provide the opportunity to cultivate a broad set of generalist skills, and then develop those skills with specialized populations during each training program rotation.

Training Goals

Our predoctoral internship goals are to prepare you for independent practice and licensure, or for additional postdoctoral training as psychologists. While your training will be broad based to help you become a well-rounded generalist or narrowly based to help you become a Geropsychologist, you will be given special opportunities to receive more focused training experiences in areas such as Geropsychology, substance use treatment, health psychology, neuropsychology, inpatient psychiatry, and primary care psychology.

To achieve our goals, we use a developmental model as the core of our training program. Supervisors commit to deliver training in a manner that is respectful to the needs of the trainee, while providing the combination of challenge and support necessary for competency development. Supervisors use formative and summative evaluation to collaboratively make decisions regarding caseload, types of patients assigned, and proximity of supervision in a way that encourages clinical skill development at an appropriate and progressive level of autonomy. The philosophy of our internship program is based in the practitioner-scholar model of training. Our training activities are designed to help interns develop competencies through the application

of scholarly knowledge to their clinical work. We value the important science upon which our clinical work is predicated – and respect the individual recipients of our clinical work.

Program Structure

Training Plan

The internship year, which begins July 3rd, consists of three, four-month major rotations and two six-month subsidiary rotations. The process of developing a training plan that ensures competence in general clinical skills, and that accommodates the interests of the individual intern, is initiated at the beginning of the internship year. This process is a collaborative one; with the intern, Training Committee members, and Training Director involved. There are two tracks within our internship program; a General Track (with 5 interns) and a Geropsychology Track (with 1 intern). The Geropsychology Track is funded by the VA's Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Centers (GRECC). The intern selected for this program receives training in geropsychology and spends eight months of his or her internship year focusing on the special problems and needs of the older adult. The remaining four month rotation and the two subsidiary rotations are spent in another training opportunity. The rotation outside of geropsychology is designed to help facilitate development of the profession wide competencies with a generalist foundation. Outside of the two required rotations for the intern who matches under the Geropsychology Track, there are no required tracks in our internship program.

During orientation, interns meet with supervisory psychology staff both informally and formally in order to learn more about specific rotations offered. This initial exposure to training staff is helpful for interns in thinking about their preferences for rotations and supervisors. At the end of the orientation period, interns will be asked to provide their rotation preferences. In doing so, they express their relative preferences. Interns' choices are reviewed by the Director of Psychology Training to ensure the preferred rotations augment previous training experiences. Every effort is made to ensure all rotations suit the intern well and contribute to development of professional level clinical skills. All interns participate in certain core training experiences.

In addition to the three major rotations, interns are given the opportunity to choose two subsidiary rotations and will be part of the testing pool. Traditionally, a caseload of 6-8 outpatient visits per week under the supervision of one or more staff psychologists selected by the intern has been observed. Training is always evolving; and such is the same here at the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System. Interns **have several choices on how to complete their two six-month subsidiary rotations**. Interns will also participate in the testing pool, which allows for a rotating assignment of assessment cases from throughout the medical center. Typically interns complete between 5-7 assessment cases each year. **A minimum of five (5) assessments are required during the internship year.**

Therefore, your training year will be comprised of roughly:

1. 23 hours in your primary rotation
2. 2 hours in individual supervision
3. 11 hours in your subsidiary rotation and testing clinic
4. 2 hours in didactics
5. 2 hours in group supervision and
6. 5 psychology honor hours

Supervision

Interns receive regularly scheduled supervision for their clinical work. They are scheduled for a minimum of one hour of individual supervision per week for their subsidiary rotation and one hour of individual supervision per week for each primary rotation. Additionally, interns receive two hours of group supervision per week. Therefore; at a minimum, interns receive two individual hours and two group hours of scheduled supervision weekly.

Dissertation Research

While interns are encouraged to complete their doctoral requirements, including the dissertation, prior to beginning the internship, it is understood some students may desire to complete their research with a Veteran population. Individual arrangements may be made with the Director of Training and the appropriate supervisors for the intern to spend up to four hours per week on such research. The intern must remain at this medical center for this research activity.

Evaluation

The supervisory psychology staff strives to create a supportive and collegial training environment where staff and interns have ample opportunity to interact. Our success in creating an accessible and effective training environment is assessed through intern evaluations of the program and individual supervisors. In addition, the Director of Training meets both formally and informally with interns multiple times during the training year to discuss intern satisfaction with the training program.

Intern progress in our training program is assessed through mid-rotation progress checks and end of rotation evaluations completed by all the intern's supervisors and the Director of Training. These evaluations address demonstrated competency in the following areas:

1. Research
2. Ethical and Legal Standards
3. Individual and Cultural Diversity
4. Professional Values, Attitudes, and Behaviors
5. Communication and Interpersonal Skills
6. Assessment
7. Intervention
8. Supervision
9. Consultation and Interprofessional/Interdisciplinary Skills

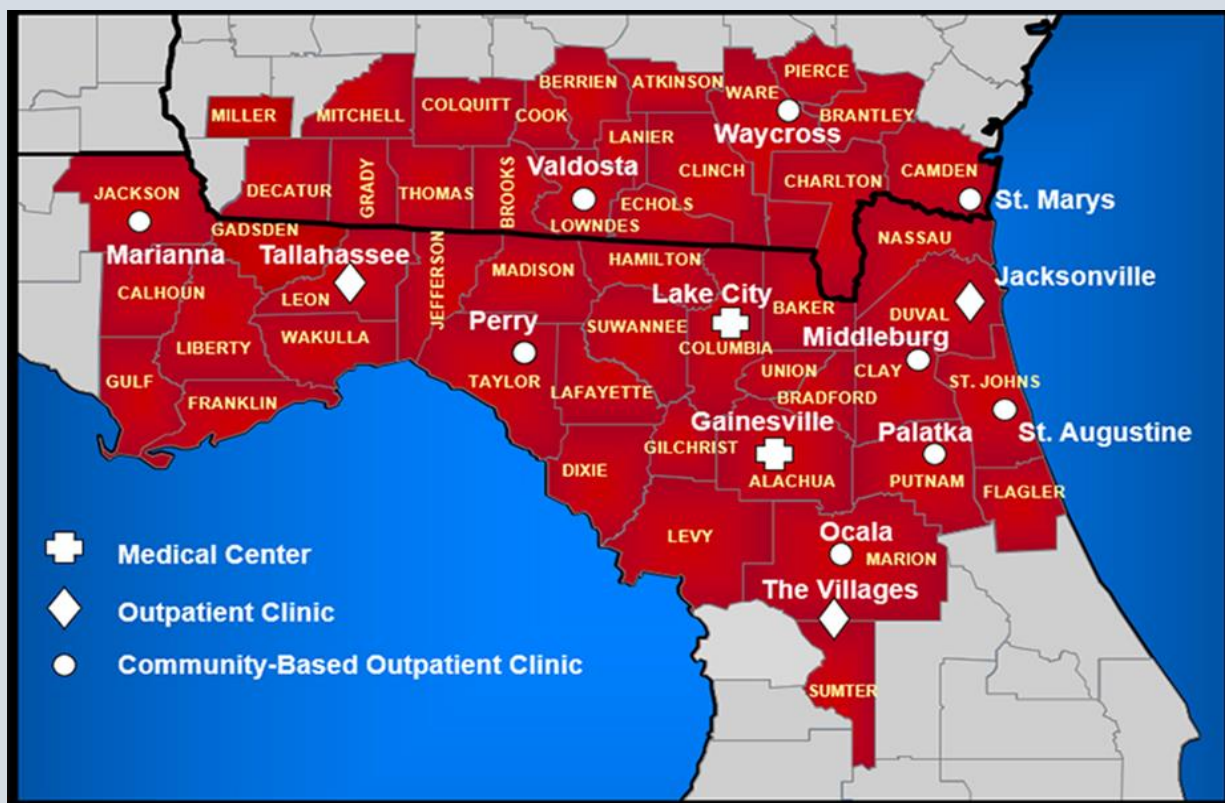
These evaluations; along with evaluations of the intern's performance in case presentations, didactics, and the *Valuing Diversity Project*, assures frequent evaluation of the intern's progress from multiple sources.

End of rotation meetings are held at the end of each rotation and include the training director, intern, and the intern's supervisors. During these meetings the formal end of rotation evaluation is discussed and completed by all the intern's supervisors for that rotation. Feedback is provided to interns about their performance based upon the evaluation described above, their training goals for the year are reviewed and training plans updated if necessary, and feedback is solicited from the interns about the program.

Interns are invited to attend and participate in our monthly Psychology Service staff meetings. Through attending these meetings as well as periodic meetings with the Training Director, interns are kept up-to-date about any changes in the program's plans or policy.

Interns are expected to adhere to the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct by the American Psychological Association and a copy of same is included in the Intern Binder they receive at the outset of the training year.

To ensure interns' rights of due process, Psychology Service has enacted Memoranda for Complaints, Grievance Procedures, Problematic Performance, Due Process, and Training Plan Amendments. This policy statement defines the actions that both interns and the Training Committee must take should problems be identified in the intern's performance. This policy is provided to all interns during orientation week as part of the Training Binder and is discussed with them to ensure that they understand their rights. Interns' complaints and/or difficulties with supervisors are subject to the same procedures. A copy of same is included in the Training Binder that interns receive at the outset of the training year.



Training Experiences

The clinical rotations described below reflect the variety of services offered by the Psychology Service at the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System. The interns' participation in five rotations (3 primary and 2 subsidiary) during the internship year is designed to increase their experience in general areas of psychological practice while also gaining rotation specific competencies in order to facilitate postdoctoral fellowships in emphasis or specialty areas as well as entry level employment.

Subsidiary Rotation

As mentioned above, in addition to your major rotations, you have the opportunity to choose from several subsidiary rotations. These subsidiary rotations will assume approximately 11 hours a week of your schedule.

If an Intern chooses a traditional outpatient clinic load for one of the six-month subsidiary rotations, those Interns are expected to carry 5-7 outpatient therapy and share in the assessment assignment during the training year. When therapy has been ended with a patient – new cases will be assigned to ensure the caseload remains fairly consistent throughout the training year. These cases are largely derived from the PCT or MHC and offer the interns an opportunity to engage individual, couples, and family psychotherapy to help round out the experiences they receive on each rotation, and depending on the subsidiary rotations chosen, the work assigned may be assessment cases from Neuropsychology or Cognitive Research.

We are very excited to say you will have an opportunity to choose as one of your subsidiary rotations PTSD evidenced-based treatment, evidence-based relationships and responsiveness, mental health clinic, or neuropsychology/research for your six-month subsidiary rotations.

Assessment Experience & Testing Pool

All interns will participate in general assessments throughout the year. The testing pool consists of assessment cases being referred for diagnostic assessment from a variety of areas in the medical center. Mostly, the testing pool cases come from the MHC, inpatient psychiatry, and health psychology. Interns take turns completing these assessments as they are referred, which comes out to, on average, 5-7 testing cases over the course of the year. The assessment cases typically consist of a diagnostic interview, medical record review, and objective and/or projective personality measures. When appropriate, other measures, such as intellectual and neuropsychological testing can be incorporated as well. Supervisors for this experience are selected based upon referral question. **A minimum of five (5) assessments are required during the internship year.**

Major 4-Month Rotations

PTSD Clinical Team (PCT) - Gainesville

Supervisory Psychologists: Lauren Tidwell, Psy.D. & Ena Begovic, Ph.D.

The PTSD Clinical Team (PCT) is an outpatient clinic specializing in evidence-based treatment for PTSD. The PCT primarily offers treatment to Veterans diagnosed with PTSD connected to military-related traumas including combat, sexual assault/trauma, physical assault, natural disasters, and accidents. There may be occasions when services are extended to Veterans diagnosed with PTSD connected to civilian-related traumas. Comorbid conditions are common and often include depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, substance use disorders, traumatic brain injury, and personality disorders. Psychosocial challenges are also common and may include homelessness, unemployment, legal problems, financial problems, and comorbid medical conditions.

The Gainesville PCT is staffed with a multidisciplinary team including members from Psychology, Psychiatry, Nursing, and Social Work. The team frequently coordinates with other clinics (both mental health and physical medicine) throughout the hospital in order to offer

comprehensive care for mental health concerns, medical problems, and psychosocial needs. The PCT offers individual therapy, group therapy, and medication management with a focus on treating PTSD and comorbid conditions.

The intern will function as a member of the team with opportunity to complete intake screening assessments, to provide psychological services, and to coordinate with other programs. A typical day might include a treatment team meeting, group therapy, individual therapy, intake assessment, and coordination with other treatment providers. Group opportunities may include Seeking Safety, CPT, STAIR, COPE, a PTSD support group, or a PTSD Skills group.

Opportunity will be provided to receive additional training in one evidence-based psychotherapy for PTSD: Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) or Prolonged Exposure (PE). The intern will then have opportunity to provide this treatment (either CPT or PE) to at least one Veteran. Given the typical length of these treatments (8-15 sessions), it may be necessary to continue working a half day with the Gainesville PCT after the end of the rotation to ensure ample opportunity to complete a full course of therapy. Certification in CPT or PE will not be offered as part of the training experience.

Rotation Goals and Objectives:

- Complete rotation and acquire hours of supervision and direct patient contact
- Complete at least 3 intake screening assessments to include clinical interview for PTSD, administration and interpretation of self-report measures, psychosocial history, diagnostic impressions, and treatment recommendations
- Serve as a co-facilitator in at least one PTSD-related coping skills group
- Complete training in one evidence-based psychotherapy – either PE or CPT
- Provide evidence-based individual psychotherapy (either PE or CPT) to at least one Veteran in the PCT
- Attend weekly PCT treatment team meetings to discuss issues related to Veteran care and treatment planning.
- Identify and recommend appropriate referrals to address comorbid conditions and/or psychosocial challenges
- Learn about available Veteran resources related to PTSD and make appropriate recommendations regarding use of these resources during provision of psychological services
- Learn about available provider resources related to PTSD and demonstrate use of at least one available resource
- Acquire information sufficient to provide a basic overview of available treatment options for PTSD to Veterans seeking treatment in the PCT
- Attend and participate in weekly supervision
- During supervision, discuss at least 1 ethical dilemma in therapy
- Discuss and apply research findings in assessment, conceptualization, diagnosis, and psychotherapy for PTSD
- Develop awareness of factors that may impact response to trauma, that may increase risk for development of PTSD, that may complicate recovery from PTSD, and that may aid in recovery from PTSD
- Develop awareness of how PTSD interacts with individual and cultural differences including ethnicity, lifestyle, gender, and age

- Meet deadlines for completion of work, including documentation
- Coordinate with PCT and other staff to ensure comprehensive care for Veterans

Clinical Neuropsychology

Supervisory Psychologists: Christian Dow, Ph.D.; Christopher N. Sozda, Ph.D., ABPP-CN; & Heather Tree, Ph.D.

The rotation offers interns the opportunity to participate in the evaluation and treatment of patients demonstrating diverse neurological disorders. Specialty populations and team experiences include dementia, traumatic brain injury, seizure disorders, multiple sclerosis, stroke, movement disorders, and various forms of psychopathology. Interns will learn to administer a variety of standard neuropsychological assessment instruments within an ongoing outpatient clinical context. Clinical practice will be supplemented with interdisciplinary didactic experiences. Interdisciplinary approaches will be stressed so that psychology interns can expect to collaborate with physicians, rehabilitation professionals, and other mental health disciplines. Under special circumstances, select interns with sufficient background preparation may elect to extend their neuropsychological assessment and treatment experience. Interns with such an interest will be offered this rotation for the first four months of internship and will be allowed to maintain neuropsychological assessment cases throughout the remaining eight months of training as a part of the outpatient therapy/assessment experience.

Interns who complete this rotation will be able to:

- Design and conduct neuropsychological interviews
- Develop a syndrome analysis, process approach to neuropsychological assessment
- Demonstrate familiarity with the administration and scoring of a wide variety of commonly employed neuropsychological assessment instruments
- Demonstrate knowledge of neuropsychological evaluation and treatment
- Write comprehensive neuropsychological reports to diverse referral sources
- Provide feedback and psychoeducation to patients and caregivers

Substance Use Rotations

There is a movement afoot. The racially motivated war on drugs has failed, and we are in need of a more nuanced approach to the resulting trauma. For too long we have misunderstood and mistreated those struggling with substance use disorders and trauma. We need all the help we can get to correct this social injustice. We can say with full confidence that there is no more rewarding work than to be on the right side of history.

We offer a well-rounded, challenging, and moving rotation centered around learning the true causes of and treatments for addiction and trauma. The opposite of addiction is not sobriety. The opposite of addiction is connection. Connection happens to also be the final step of trauma recovery. So, our training experiences highlight the importance of vets' re-connecting to their emotions, their memories, their identities, and their communities while healing from complex trauma. In the process, we have seen repeatedly that trainees come to understand themselves in new and unexpected ways.

Experiences in group therapy, individual therapy, and psychological assessment are plentiful, rich, and guided by modalities proven to facilitate recovery from Substance Use Disorder (SUD),

including 12 step facilitation, Cognitive Behavior Therapy for SUD (CBT-SUD), Mentalization Based Therapy (MBT), Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention (MBRP), Motivational Interviewing/Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MI/MET), Prolonged Exposure (PE), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) for PTSD, Skills Training for Affective and Interpersonal Regulation (STAIR), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), and many others. There are multiple psychologists and trainees who work together in our substance use treatment programs as a built-in sub-team within the clinic to provide support, mentorship, and comradery.

We will look back at these times as a breakthrough in the progression of our relationship with substances and trauma. It is an exciting and harrowing moment. Ask around if you like, because we know that past trainees will confirm our description. And, we hope to count you among them in the future.

1. Gainesville Substance Abuse Treatment Team (SATT)

Supervisory Psychologists: Jason Pickren, Psy.D. & Michele Shriner, Ph.D.

We offer a well-rounded, challenging, and moving rotation centered around learning the true causes of and treatments for addiction and trauma. The opposite of addiction is not sobriety. The opposite of addiction is connection. Connection happens to also be the last step of trauma recovery. So, our training experiences highlight the importance of vets' re-connecting to their emotions, their memories, their identities, and their communities while healing from complex trauma. In the process, we have seen repeatedly that trainees come to understand themselves in new and unexpected ways.

Interns who complete this rotation will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of substance use disorders, diagnostic criteria, and course
- Demonstrate knowledge of Addiction Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria for determining appropriate level of intervention on behalf of a patient with a substance use disorder
- Utilize assessment measures which may guide SUD interventions
- Conduct SUD-focused group therapy
- Conduct individual therapy targeting SUD and associated mental health disorders
- Work with and organize a multidisciplinary treatment team"

2. Lake City VAMC SUD Training (PRRTP and SAR RTP)

Supervisory Psychologists: John Auerbach, Ph.D.; Erica Molina Vergara, Psy.D.; & Justin Trapani, Psy.D.

The Lake City VA Medical Center offers a full range of comprehensive health care, including both specialty outpatient and residential care for Veterans with SUDs. This rotation also operates with the treatment philosophy that addiction is best countered through connection. Attachment (or the creation of significant emotional bonds), mindfulness (or awareness in the present, without judging) and mentalization (or the understanding of thoughts and emotions, both one's own and those of others) are therefore essential to our program. In consultation with the supervisor, the intern will develop a rotation training plan that fosters expertise in all stages of treatment of patients with SUDs. This will include initial intake assessment, recommendation of care according to American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria, and treatment of both outpatients and residential patients through individual and group modalities. The residential

dual-diagnosis program allows the intern exposure to a small, psychiatrically complex patient population multiple times per week, permitting exploration of a unique level of depth in case conceptualization and diagnostic clarification.

Specific assessment approaches with which the intern will gain competence include structured interviews for patients with SUDs, psychopathology assessment, personality assessment, performance-based assessment, neuropsychological assessment, and use of the Brief Addiction Monitor, which is now being used by the VA nationwide as an objective measure of SUD treatment outcomes. Treatment modalities include MI/MET, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), CBT for SUD, MBRP, MBT, Seeking Safety, Process-oriented Group Therapy, and Contingency Management for patients with SUD.

The intern will develop this expertise with the support of, and in consultation with, a diverse multidisciplinary treatment team that includes not only the supervising psychologist, but psychiatric nurses, social workers, a psychiatrist, occupational and recreational therapists, vocational rehabilitation specialists, addiction counselors, peer support specialists, and sometimes a postdoctoral psychology resident. This will allow exposure to a holistic model of care that emphasizes positive psychology and a humanistic approach to recovery. The rotation is designed so that the intern completes the experience with sufficient expertise to function as a generalist capable of competently treating patients with substance use disorders. However, interns with previous SUD experience have the opportunity to advance their expertise to a degree that they can compete effectively for roles on SUD specialty care teams within the VA.

Interns who complete this rotation will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of substance use disorders, diagnostic criteria, and course
- Demonstrate knowledge of Addiction Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria for determining appropriate level of intervention on behalf of a patient with a substance use disorder
- Utilize assessment measures which may guide SUD interventions
- Conduct SUD-focused group therapy
- Conduct individual therapy targeting SUD and associated mental health disorders
- Work with and organize a multidisciplinary treatment team

PRRC/HONOR Center Rotation

Supervisory Psychologists: Amy Voltmer, Psy.D. & Julius Gylys, Ph.D.

This rotation offers a range of clinical experiences in the Community Reintegration and Recovery Service Line, which serves homeless Veterans and Veterans with severe and chronic mental illness. Interns will have the opportunity to learn from and collaborate closely with multiple interdisciplinary teams to address a range of diagnoses, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD, MDD, and SUD. One day of the rotation will be spent at the HONOR Center, our residential treatment program for homeless Veterans, which serves 45 Veterans with a variety of medical, psychological and/or substance abuse problems. One day of the rotation will be spent at our Psychosocial Recovery and Rehabilitation Center (PRRC), which provides outpatient, Recovery-oriented treatment focused on reintegration into the community. The third day will be dedicated to follow-up appointments and psychological assessments, depending on the intern's training needs.

There are several unique aspects to this rotation that are particularly important to emphasize. First, working in any hospital setting requires strong interdisciplinary skills, and this is especially true in working with our most vulnerable and disenfranchised Veterans. This rotation offers the invaluable opportunity to learn from providers from other disciplines, many of whom have been serving this population for years. Second, this rotation allows for a broad range of experiences that can be tailored to the intern's training goals. In addition to the HONOR Center and PRRC, interns would have the option to work with Veterans across levels of care, including the MHICM (Mental Health Intensive Case Management) and HudVash programs. Finally, this rotation provides a unique perspective on trauma treatment that may include, but often transcends, traditional trauma processing treatment. Our emphasis on community reintegration offers unique opportunities to augment coping skills, address avoidance, and build a supportive community.

Interns who complete this rotation will be able to:

- Demonstrate an ability to participate in interdisciplinary treatment planning for individuals struggling with homelessness in addition to severe and chronic mental illness
- Identify and utilize appropriate assessment tools to provide diagnostic clarification and aid in treatment planning – Assessment tools utilized at this rotation include self-report, personality assessment, and cognitive assessment
- Provide individual therapy with an emphasis on Recovery-oriented principles
- Develop a time-limited therapy group based on intern strengths/interests and the needs of the community
- Demonstrate understanding of the community integration model by participating in at least 1 community integration outing with the supervising psychologist

Primary Care - Mental Health Integration (PC-MHI)

Supervisory Psychologists: TBD

On the Primary Care - Mental Health Integration (PC- MHI) rotation, interns learn how to adapt traditional clinical and health psychology services for the primary care setting. Typical clinical activities include brief evaluation and treatment of clinical and health psychology problems; consultation and collaboration with primary care practitioners for psychological and medical management; and triage decision making to prioritize service delivery.

Common referral questions include ones which can be categorized as mental health (e.g. depression, PTSD, anxiety, dementia, somatoform, adjustment disorders); health behavior change (e.g. tobacco cessation, increasing physical activity, and weight management); and behavioral medicine (e.g. insomnia, pain management, coping with illness, treatment adherence, and practitioner-patient communication). Interns will have less frequent, albeit significant, interaction with patients presenting with chronic, severe mental illness as well.

While the rotation emphasizes individual treatment, there are opportunities to participate in tobacco cessation and other behavioral health groups as available (e.g., tinnitus, MOVE!). As primary care is an ever-changing environment, group development and program evaluation are also potential experiences. Interns will also have the opportunity to partake in primary care behavioral health and medical team meetings. At times, a University of Florida graduate student

trains on the same rotation and the VAMC intern is invited to actively participate in training supervision as appropriate to their level of competence.

Rotation Goals and Highlights

Interns will develop skills in conducting brief assessments in the primary care setting. Assessments will include record review, clinical interview, and brief psychological testing as appropriate. Interns will be able to diagnose major presenting problems, identify psychosocial issues impacting functioning, and develop appropriate treatment plans. In addition, they will learn to provide feedback, including diagnostic impressions and treatment plan, to the patient and primary care team in a concise manner. As part of the rotation, interns will also practice brief-oriented behavioral health sessions. The following is a list of rotation highlights:

Interns who complete this rotation will be able to:

- This is a full-time rotation, 3-days per week (2 days “on call” for same-day warm handoffs and 1 day for outpatient return appointments).
- Experience being on call via the team’s mobile phone by pager for real-time, same-day consultation and referrals from primary care and the emergency department providers
- Learn to adapt report writing skills using brief/concise format
- Develop skills in brief interventions (2-6 sessions) for a variety of presenting issues
- Discuss relevant research literature with supervisor
- Build familiarization with psychotropic medications and their clinical use
- Opportunities for group treatment in smoking cessation or behavioral health groups as available, group development participation may be possible
- Obtain extensive practice with triage, building treatment plans, and implementing interdisciplinary treatment plans
- Opportunities to participate in interdisciplinary PCBH team meetings and other medical team meetings
- Discussions on ethical and professional issues with patients and specifically those that relate to PCBH services
- Discussions of diversity issues pertaining to individual and group differences
- Obtain experience with a diverse set of patients during the rotation with respect to presenting condition, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and culture

Women’s Primary Care Clinic and Military Sexual Trauma

Supervisory Psychologist: To’Meisha Edwards, Psy.D.

This primary care clinic provides outpatient medical and mental health services to Women Veterans and eligible wives of Veterans. In addition to the supervisory psychologist, the team is composed of physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses (RNs and LPNs), a licensed clinical social worker, a full-time psychiatrist, and a clerical support team.

An intern will have the opportunity to participate in an interdisciplinary team approach to patient care (Primary Care Mental Health Integration – PC-MHI) involving both a full range of behavioral health issues and treatment related to specialized areas; such as military sexual trauma, intimate partner violence, complex trauma, personality disorders, combat trauma, and transgender/gender dysphoria. Particular learning experiences include psychological evaluations and provision of evidenced-based psychotherapy approaches, both short- and long-term,

including trauma-based approaches and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). The DBT program in the Women's Clinic has been established to provide empirically based treatment for some of the most distressed female Veterans. Treatment interventions may be utilized with individuals, couples, families, and group. Opportunities to co-facilitate ongoing interpersonal process and cognitive-behavioral groups are available to the intern; including Cognitive Processing Therapy, Prolonged Exposure, Interpersonal Therapy for Depression, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation, and CBT for Chronic Pain. An intern may initiate and develop short-term psychotherapy groups to address specific health-related concerns; such as assertiveness, weight loss, coping with depression, and parenting. An intern will also have the opportunity to work with women across a wide age-range and cultural background.

Interns who complete this rotation will be able to:

- Conduct comprehensive psychological assessments involving interviews and testing as appropriate
- Develop appropriate therapy treatment plans and referrals
- Conduct brief and long-term individual psychotherapy with female Veterans, including evidence-based trauma protocols and Dialectical Behavior Therapy
- Co-lead existing groups and/or organize new groups to meet the intern's areas of interest
- Gain an understanding of the social issues impacting female Veterans in their daily lives; especially the issues of sexual trauma, intimate partner violence, familial responsibilities, adjustment issues, race, gender, and financial constraints

Medical Psychology

Supervisory Psychologist: Valerie Shorter, Ph.D.

The Medical Psychology program offers psychological services to Medical and Surgical inpatients and outpatients and their families on a consultation-liaison basis. Currently, consultations are being conducted on medical inpatient wards, intensive care units (cardiothoracic, medical, and surgical), a chemotherapy clinic, and other medical/surgical specialty clinics.

An intern will have the opportunity to observe and participate in an interdisciplinary team approach to patient care. Particular learning experiences, in addition to psychological evaluation and treatment, will include interacting with patients and their families, filling the role of liaison between patient and caregiver or family member, assisting in end-of-life planning, and generally facilitating the patient's adjustment to the treatment regimen and adopting a more healthful lifestyle. Both short-term and extended interventions may be utilized with individuals, couples, or families. Interns will also have the opportunity to work with medical inpatients who have been identified as high risk for suicide, to provide support and ensure that their mental health needs are met while on medical unit. In addition, interns will also perform evaluations of candidates for organ transplantation (kidney, heart, lung, liver), bone marrow/stem cell transplantation, transgender healthcare (e.g., gender-affirming pre-surgical evaluations, mental health evaluation for gender-affirming hormone therapy, LGBTQ+ support groups) and other medical interventions.

Other aspects of the program include weekly Medical Psychology team meetings and clinical health psychology journal/book discussions. Meetings with hospital or clinic staff groups are

conducted upon request, either ad hoc to address matters of acute concern, or on a regular schedule in the interest of providing support, improving communication, and enhancing team identity and cohesion.

Interns who complete this rotation will be able to:

- Conceptualize a psychological consultation issue utilizing clinical interview and history, including information from the client's Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) entries.
- Demonstrate competence in consultation, in responding to referring professionals, and in intervention as indicated.
- Conduct evaluations preceding medical/surgical procedures and convey results of these effectively both verbally and in written reports.
- Demonstrate knowledge of medical record review, medical terminology, pharmacology, and pathology.
- Participate in the interdisciplinary approach to health care, spanning the range from prophylaxis to assisting in end-of-life planning.
- Acquire familiarity with science-based and other professional literature pertinent to health psychology topics, receiving materials from supervisor and researching relevant literature independently.

Geropsychology

Please note, due to the changing nature of the coronavirus pandemic and pandemic-related guidance, available training experiences and requirements for trainees on geropsychology rotations may vary from those described below.

(1) Malcom Randall VA Medical Center Geropsychology (Gainesville)

Supervisory Psychologist: Carly Ostrom, Ph.D.

This rotation includes opportunities in the Gainesville Community Living Center (CLC) and the Palliative Care Consult Team. Interns on this rotation work closely with interdisciplinary teams to provide primarily inpatient services to older adults.

The Gainesville CLC has 28 beds, and provides comprehensive interdisciplinary assessment, treatment, preventive, and restorative/rehabilitative care to Veterans who have sustained a change in physical functioning or who need skilled nursing care (e.g., wound care, IV antibiotics). Length of stay is typically 2 weeks to 90 days. Common presenting concerns in the CLC include: Adjustment (to medical conditions, change in functioning, hospitalization), depression, anxiety, insomnia, pain management, grief and anticipatory grief, cognitive deficits, substance use, PTSD, and challenging/responsive behaviors.

The Gainesville Palliative Care Consult Team is a multidisciplinary team that addresses inpatient and outpatient consults for Veterans who have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness. The team meets and rounds daily. During rounding, the team meets with Veterans and their loved ones to facilitate goals of care conversations, explore values and treatment goals, assess and manage symptoms, and facilitate next steps such as hospice care. Psychology trainees may provide team consultation, individual therapy, and caregiver/family support.

(2) Lake City VAMC CLC

Supervisory Psychologists: Carrie Ambrose, Ph.D. & Julie Hirsch, Ph.D.

The Community Living Center at the **Lake City VAMC** is located approximately 45 miles north of Gainesville. It consists of five separate neighborhoods with a total of 230 beds. Each neighborhood has its own interdisciplinary team in which psychology is fully integrated. The neighborhoods' specialties include care for people with dementia and other cognitive challenges, rehabilitation and restorative care, intensive skilled nursing/medical management, long-term care, hospice/palliative care, and inpatient respite stay. Training opportunities include: short-term and long-term psychotherapy, complete neuropsychological testing and capacity evaluations, implement behavioral interventions (STAR-VA) and behavioral contracts, facilitate psychoeducational or psychotherapeutic groups (e.g., Meaning-Centered Psychotherapy Group, Next Steps Amputee Group, Mindful Warrior), staff education, family therapy, and bereavement counseling.

Culture Transformation at the Lake City CLC: Resident-directed care that transforms the long-term care medical model to one that nurtures the human spirit, as well as meeting medical needs. Culture Change is not a finite destination, but a work in progress, always evolving to meet the needs of the residents. Our goal is creating a home rather than an institution and improving quality of life rather than just quantity of life.

Overall Goals of Culture Change are:

1. **Restore** control over daily living to residents, respecting the right of residents to make their own decisions
2. **Involve** all levels of staff in the care process, honoring those who work most closely with residents
3. **Include** families and friends in a comprehensive team building approach to care
4. **Provide** a familiar and hospitable environment, a supportive workplace and responsive, individualized care practices that focus on the needs and preferences of people

Psychology has an essential role in Culture Transformation within the CLC, including leading monthly Quality of Life meetings, in which culture-change ideas are brainstormed, specific goals are developed, and progress is discussed. Exciting culture-transformation successes include establishing a buffet-style lunch rather than serving Veteran's trays in their rooms, initiating Montessori-inspired engagement, implementing Music & Memory programming for Veterans with dementia, utilizing "Do you recall" videos, starting a quarterly CLC newsletter, modifying medical and nursing practices to reduce unnecessary blood draws and care tasks, and planning special meals, holiday celebrations, gatherings, and monthly CLC events.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BOTH GEROPSYCHOLOGY ROTATIONS

Interdisciplinary Teams: An integral part of both geropsychology rotations is participation as a member of an interdisciplinary treatment team, which includes representatives from Nursing, Medicine, Social Work, Physical or Kinesio Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Recreational Therapy, Dietetics, Chaplain services, and Pharmacy. Interns will attend interdisciplinary didactic rounds and care plan meetings. Psychology frequently collaborates with multiple disciplines and provides consultation for referral sources with services ranging from evaluation to behavioral management or psychotherapy.

Veteran Diversity: Veterans in Geropsychology settings are heterogeneous in terms of their:

- a) ethnicity and intersectionality
- b) age (increase in referrals for Veterans in their 50s and 60s)
- c) cognitive abilities (cognitively intact, mild to major neurocognitive disorders)
- d) medical conditions (heart conditions, respiratory conditions, strokes, cancers, diabetes, kidney disease, obesity, amputations, recent surgical procedures, wounds, infections)
- e) lifestyle (rural, unusual living arrangements, chronic substance abuse)
- f) presenting problems (adjustment to medical conditions or functional changes, depression, anxiety, sleeping problems, grief, chronic pain, SMI, relational problems)

With our diverse population, interns can tailor the training experience to their interests and training goals.

Opportunities: Depending on the internship position (Geropsychology Track or General) and selected Geropsychology rotations, interns who complete Geropsychology training will have the opportunity to:

- Conduct initial assessments of new admissions
- Select, administer, score, and interpret tests appropriate for geriatric populations, such as symptom assessments, informant-based measures, cognitive screeners, and limited neuropsychological assessments
- Conduct medical decision-making capacity assessments and write reports
- Conduct behavioral analysis using STAR-VA and develop a behavior management plan
- Perform evaluations of dementia and age-related cognitive decline, becoming familiar with the prevailing diagnostic nomenclature and specific diagnostic criteria
- Provide variety of interventions, including individual therapy, group therapy, caregiver support, family therapy, behavioral intervention, behavioral health (e.g., smoking cessation, pain management), environmental modification, and interdisciplinary team interventions
- Gain factual and experiential information about certain life events that typically occur in later life
- Utilize specific techniques for working with older adults who experience emotional suffering and dysfunction secondary to dementia
- Learn about medical conditions and medications, and their effects on personality, emotion, cognitive functioning, and behavior
- Work with older adults who are diverse in terms of socioeconomic and demographic factors, culture, medical conditions, personal and spiritual values and beliefs, life experiences, cognitive abilities, communication needs (e.g., aphasia, hearing loss), and social context
- Understand and learn how to respond to ethical concerns, such as those related to suspected exploitation, balancing safety and autonomy, working with surrogate decision-makers, privacy limitations in the CLC setting, etc.
- Contribute to culture transformation and quality of life efforts
- On average, trainees spend at least 8 hours a week in direct contact (e.g., individual therapy, assessment, behavioral observation, IDT consultation/collaboration)

GEROPSYCHOLOGY TRAINING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

(1) **Assessment and Diagnostic Competency**: To broaden the intern's development of interviewing and assessment skills, utilizing the psychodiagnostic interview and neurocognitive screening to provide an initial assessment and treatment plan.

- Observe clinical interviews conducted by the supervisor, prior to assuming the clinical responsibility for the intakes or consultations – perform at least 5 intake interviews
- Integrate relevant information from rounds and interdisciplinary team consultation into case conceptualizations
- Learn how to evaluate consultations (i.e., identify what unstated problem may be underlying a consult) by discussing each consult with the supervisor and, if possible, with the referral source
- Select, administer, score, and accurately interpret tests appropriate for older adults
- Understand aging individuals in the context of social structures, as social contexts define and shape the lives of older people

(2) **Intervention Competency**: To develop intern's competency in case conceptualization and then selecting from a wide variety of treatment modalities from behavioral management to traditional psychotherapy based on the needs and abilities of the individual Veteran.

- Develop a treatment plan tailored to the Veteran's individual needs
- Plan at least one behavioral intervention
- Provide short-term psychotherapy for at least 3 clients
- Provide couples therapy or family counseling as needed
- Professionally and appropriately consult and communicate with an interdisciplinary team
- Attend weekly team meetings and rounds, providing succinct summaries of relevant assessments or conceptualizations and working with team to develop an overall plan
- Develop brief and effective writing skills for assessments and progress notes
- For consultations, give succinct and effective feedback to referral source

(3) **Professional and Ethical Behavior**: To enhance intern's ability to consider ethical issues and to make professional and ethical decisions in their work.

- Discuss ethical dilemmas faced by psychologists who work with older adults, including dying with dignity, DNR declarations, Advance Directives, infantilization, balancing safety and autonomy, capacity and surrogate decision-makers, the right to decline treatment, privacy limitations in the CLC setting, confidentiality, and the provision of palliative care
- Appropriately respond to ethical dilemmas, such as seeking supervision, consulting with the interdisciplinary team, mandatory reporting if indicated, following ethical principles, modeling respectful interactions, and mitigating risk

(4) **Human Diversity**: To promote intern's knowledge of and sensitivity to issues of human diversity and cultural differences.

- Discuss individual and cultural differences, ethnicity, and sexual diversity, as it relates to the conceptualization and treatment of Veterans
- Identify age-related diversity factors, such as cohort-based differences in experiences, norms, and values
- Work effectively with diverse Veterans and staff and discuss related issues in supervision

(5) **Practitioner-Scholar Model:** To promote the intern's ability to seek out and to apply both new and previous knowledge about the lives of older adults and how that relates to their specialized care.

- Read and discuss at least two recommended readings or scientific articles related to older adulthood, and apply the knowledge to working with older adults
- Appreciate the effects common medications may have on older adults
- The GRECC intern will present or lead a journal article discussion at a GRECC Friday Noon Conference
- The GRECC intern will present at the annual GRECC Poster Day

Inpatient Psychiatry

Supervisory Psychologists: Kerry Wagner-Bellocchio, Psy.D. & Andrea Aguilar, Psy.D.

This rotation offers interns the opportunity to participate in the evaluation and treatment of patients with severe mental disorders on the inpatient psychiatric unit at the Gainesville VAMC. This setting provides training experiences with Veterans suffering from acute psychological disturbances and substance use concerns. Trainees will spend three days per week on the inpatient unit and will function as part of an interdisciplinary team. Interns will conduct psychological assessments which include diagnostic interviews, psychopathology and personality tests. They will also can participate in a variety of treatment modalities, including individual and group therapy. The inpatient unit is a vibrant interdisciplinary team setting, in which psychologists are highly valued team members. Specific training opportunities for this rotation are described below.

Inpatient Unit

On the inpatient unit, the intern works with patients in need of stabilization during a crisis or decompensation, with typical diagnoses including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and with typical clinical problems involving acute psychoses, suicidality, homicidality, and comorbid substance use disorders. In this setting, the period for assessment and treatment of a patient is almost always short term (i.e., approximately 1-2 weeks). In addition to diagnostic and assessment opportunities, the intern will have the opportunity to participate in brief, solution-focused individual interventions that include motivational, skills-based, or psychoeducational evidence-based treatments, such as Motivational Interviewing for substance use disorders and components of evidence-based group therapy interventions like Social Skills Training for severe mental illness, as well as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training for mood and personality disorders. Finally, there are multiple opportunities to participate in program development and evaluation.

Subsidiary 6-month Rotations

Gainesville Mental Health Clinic Outpatient Rotation

Supervisory Psychologists: Cahryn Anderson, Ph.D.

The Gainesville Mental Health clinic (MHC) is an outpatient multidisciplinary generalist program. Congruent with the generalist model, this rotation is meant to expose interns to the treatment of Veterans presenting with a variety of diagnoses, psychosocial backgrounds, and

levels of acuity. In this rotation, interns provide mental health assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and crisis intervention services to Veterans referred from psychiatric and medical evaluation with a broad range of mental health needs. Given the variety in presentations and that not one theory can address the needs of all patients, this rotation is strong in preparing students to learn and finesse skills related to theoretical integration. The theoretical underpinnings of the program integrate modern psychology frameworks and evidenced based practices. During this rotation, interns will have an opportunity demonstrate the necessary skills to function as a generalist psychologist upon graduation.

Interns are supported through supervision to conceptualize, intervene, and assess therapeutic progress by verbalizing in case presentations their rationale for the inclusion of a given theoretical perspective or intervention, and their assessment of the therapeutic outcome. Students are supported forming healthy therapeutic relationships with the patients based on the guiding principle that connection is perhaps one of the strongest predictors of therapeutic success.

Interns who complete this rotation will be able to:

- Evaluate and diagnose mental and emotional disorders of individuals with an emphasis on obtaining a strong social history honoring aspects of human diversity and multiculturalism
- Conduct risk assessments, case conceptualizations, treatment planning, and treatment delivery
- Demonstrate multidisciplinary collaboration with the treatment team; including the psychiatrist, APRN, therapist, RN, medical doctor, and social services
- Assist treatment team on cases that require differential diagnosis assessment through the use of relevant psychological testing
- Observe patients in various situations; select, administer, and interpret intelligence, personality, or other psychological tests to diagnose disorders and formulate plans of treatment, and provide consultation to other mental health professionals with regard to test results
- Treat psychological disorders to effect improved adjustments utilizing various psychological techniques; select appropriate treatment approach; and plan frequency, intensity, and duration of individual, group, and family therapies
- Assess patient progress and modify treatment programs accordingly; communicate with and counsel family members as appropriate.

Neuropsychology and Research Outpatient Rotation

Supervisory Psychologists: Christian Dow, Ph.D.; Christopher N. Sozda, Ph.D., ABPP-CN; Heather Tree, Ph.D.; & John Williamson, Ph.D., ABPP-CN.

The rotation offers select interns with sufficient background preparation the opportunity to extend their neuropsychological assessment and treatment experience. Interns with such an interest will be offered this as their outpatient therapy/assessment experience.

Within this rotation, interns may also have the opportunity to participate in research with Dr. Williamson.

Relationships and Responsiveness Outpatient Rotation

Supervisory Psychologists: Jennifer Adkins, Ph.D.; John Auerbach, Ph.D.; Kimberly Shaw, Ph.D.; & Amy Voltmer, Psy.D.

Tailoring psychological services to individuals couples and families has been a foundational facet of psychologists' practice since the inception of modern psychotherapy. Recently, the interdivisional APA Task Force on Evidence-based Relationships and Responsiveness completed a comprehensive metaanalysis of psychotherapy outcomes, responsiveness/individual adaptations, and the therapeutic relationship. They concluded the patient, the therapy relationship, and transdiagnostic adaptations exercise more influence on therapy outcome than any particular treatment method. Among their specific conclusions are the following:

- The psychotherapy relationship makes substantial and consistent contributions to patient outcome independent of the specific type of psychological treatment.
- The therapy relationship accounts for client improvement (or lack of improvement) as much as, and probably more than, the particular treatment method.
- Practice and treatment guidelines should explicitly address therapist behaviors and qualities that promote a facilitative therapy relationship.
- Adapting or tailoring the therapy relationship to specific patient characteristics enhances the effectiveness of psychological treatment.
- Adapting psychological treatment (responsiveness) to transdiagnostic client characteristics contributes to successful outcomes at least as much as, and probably more than, adapting treatment to the client's diagnosis.

This rotation focuses on evidence-based transdiagnostic adaptations. Moreover, this rotation is firmly rooted in Evidence-based Practice of Psychology, the goal of which is to promote effective psychological practice and enhance public health by applying empirically supported principles; and the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture, and preference. Evidenced-based practice of psychology articulates a decision-making process for integrating multiple streams of research evidence into the intervention and assessment process.

This outpatient rotation will offer a range of clinical experiences in Evidence-based Relationships and Responsiveness that can be tailored to the intern's training goals. Like other rotations in our training program, this rotation will provide measurement-based, developmentally-focused, trauma-responsive care in individual, group, couples and family modalities. Examples of therapies available include Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Depression, Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT), Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation-Narrative Therapy (STAIR-NT), Mentalization Based Treatment (MBT) for Personality Disorders, Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy (IBCT) and Cognitive-Behavioral Conjoint Therapy for PTSD (CBCT).

Additionally, there will be opportunities for trainees to complete assessments using the Therapeutic Assessment model. Measurement-based care will include use of the Outcome

Rating Scale (ORS) and Session Rating Scale (SRS) for “client-based scaling which provides instant feedback and privileges the client’s voice when assessing the effectiveness of therapy.” Didactics, readings and supervision discussions will focus on the underlying science of the healing mechanisms of relationships, including interpersonal neurobiology, attachment theory, and polyvagal theory.

Trauma-focused Outpatient Rotation – Emphasis in EBTs

Supervisory Psychologists: John Auerbach, Ph.D.; Elizabeth P. Dizney, Psy.D.; Lauren Tidwell, Psy.D.; Amy Voltmer, Ph.D.; & Kerry Wagner-Bellocchio, Psy.D.

The NF/SG VHS has several PTSD Clinical Teams throughout the catchment area. These teams provide treatment to Veterans diagnosed with PTSD connected to military-related traumas; including combat, sexual assault, physical assault, natural disasters, and accidents. There may be occasions when services are extended to Veterans diagnosed with PTSD connected to civilian-related traumas. Comorbid conditions are common and often include depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, substance use disorders, traumatic brain injury, and personality disorders. Psychosocial challenges are also common and may include homelessness, unemployment, legal problems, financial problems, and comorbid medical conditions. The PTSD Program Manager is Dr. Julie Liszka (Staff Psychologist) who also is a certified trainer in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT). As part of our dedication to training new psychologists to serve our Veterans across the country, we strive to offer the 3-day CPT Workshop at the beginning of the training year to interns who are interested in becoming a certified CPT provider. While we make effort to provide this amazing opportunity, we cannot guarantee that it will be offered nor that completion for certification can be obtained.

An intern who selects this rotation will spend about 12-16 hrs./week providing care to Veterans referred from any PCT clinic in our catchment area. On average interns accept and maintain about 5-6 Veterans on their caseload. This rotation focuses primarily on individual therapy and treatment can vary from face-to-face to VA Video Connect (VVC). If an intern is participating in CPT certification, they will also participate in weekly consultation call with Dr. Julie Liszka or another VISN 8 CPT trainer in addition to 1 hour of weekly supervision with their direct supervisor for this rotation.

Rotation Goals and Objectives:

- Complete rotation and acquire hours of supervision and direct patient contact
- Complete training in one evidence-based psychotherapy (PE or CPT) – Certification cannot be guaranteed as part of the training experience
- If attempting to complete offered certification in CPT (not guaranteed) – attend and fully participate in weekly consultation calls with CPT trainer and staff psychologist Julie Liszka, Ph.D.
- Provide evidence-based individual psychotherapy to at least two Veterans
- Identify and recommend appropriate referrals to address comorbid conditions and/or psychosocial challenges
- Learn about available Veteran resources related to PTSD and make appropriate recommendations regarding use of these resources during provision of psychological services

- Learn about available provider resources related to PTSD and demonstrate use of at least one available resource
- Acquire information sufficient to provide a basic overview of available treatment options for PTSD to Veterans seeking treatment in the PCT
- Attend and participate in weekly supervision
- During supervision, discuss at least 1 ethical dilemma in therapy
- Discuss and apply research findings in assessment, conceptualization, diagnosis, and psychotherapy for PTSD
- Develop awareness of factors that may impact response to trauma, that may increase risk for development of PTSD, that may complicate recovery from PTSD, and that may aid in recovery from PTSD
- Develop awareness of how PTSD interacts with individual and cultural differences, including ethnicity, lifestyle, gender, and age
- Meet deadlines for completion of work, including documentation
- Coordinate with PCT and other staff to ensure comprehensive care for Veterans

Structured Learning Experiences

The internship program has a wide array of seminars offered. Additionally, many of the seminars and case conferences are eligible for CE credit. Because of the the proximity of The University of Florida (UF) and other VA's in the state, there is an ongoing menu of workshops, presentations, and seminars offered throughout the year at a variety of venues; such as our VA, UF, and other VA's both in person and by teleconference. Interns are welcome to use Authorized Absence (AA) to attend workshops off-site (up to 5 days).

The content of our seminars and CE's fall into a number of broad areas including and not limited to: the application of theory and science to the professional delivery of psychological services; professional conduct and ethics; professional development; standards for providers of psychological services; cultural and individual diversity; a variety of evidence based interventions; principles of psychotherapy; supervision; crisis management; and job/postdoc search. Interns contribute to the selection of presentation topics each year as they are asked to provide input into specific topics in which they have an interest and these requests are accomodated to the best of our ability.

Interns are required to develop and present during the course of the year – with their final presentation being their Valuing Diversity Group Project as part of our CE series.

Requirements for Completion

Interns are expected to abide by the APA ethical principles and relevant Florida Rules and Laws. Interns are expected to achieve minimal levels of achievement in all competency areas for each rotation. Specifically, interns are required to receive ratings of 3 (Able to perform with moderate supervision for clinical and administrative functions) for the first rotation, 4 (Able to function with minimal supervision for clinical and administrative functions) for the second rotation, and 5 (Able to enter the field as a postdoctoral resident) for the third rotation. These ratings demonstrate interns are performing in a manner consistent with their current level of training. Evaluation forms are based on the competency areas identified above and ensure we are measuing performance in areas identified as being core to our training program. Supervisors

complete mid-rotation evaluations for each intern to review progress toward the required level of achievement. The formal evaluation of intern performance occurs after each 4-month rotation and consists of evaluative input from supervisors and the Director of Training. In addition, interns have the opportunity to provide their evaluation of the rotation experiences and supervisors at the conclusion of each rotation. We encourage and model ongoing communication and informal evaluation of interns and of our training program throughout each rotation.

Facility and Training Resources

The North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System Psychology Internship Program has a number of training resources available both intramurally and through the auspices of the University of Florida. Psychology Service has administrative positions to assist in providing clerical and technical support to the internship program. All interns have access to office space where they see patients. Each office has a telephone and an individual Windows-based personal computer for in-office use.

The Lake City and Gainesville VA Medical Centers maintain their own professional libraries, which are open to the interns, as is the 220,000 volume medical library at the J. Hillis Miller Health Center, which receives 2,000 periodicals. The University of Florida's libraries contain a total of 2.6 million bound volumes, which are available for reference. Literature searches and regional interlibrary loan services are also available through the VA medical library. Both audiotape and videotape capabilities are available through Psychology Service and the Medical Media Service. A videotape and audiotape library is also maintained. Most commonly used intelligence, personality, achievement, vocational, and neuropsychological tests are available in our test file. Some are also available in an automated administration and interpretation package. Windows-based computers with word processing, database, and statistical software are available. A computerized patient database permits patient scheduling, as well as retrieval of medical and biographic information.

Administrative Policies and Procedures

Stipend, Hours, and Leave

The internship is full-time for a year beginning the first pay period in July and ending the last week in June or the closest work day the following year. Interns are entitled to 11 Federal holidays and earn sick leave and vacations days at a rate of four hours each per two-week pay period. Interns may use Authorized Absence (AA) for their dissertation defense. Additionally, interns are able to utilize AA for workshops and presentations with advanced supervisory approval (a total of 5 days of AA will be considered during the training year). Interns with whom we match are encouraged to look into any specific State requirements for hours required on internship. Our internship is a 2080 hour internship – but these hours do not take leave into consideration (104 hours of Sick Leave, 104 hours of Annual Leave, 88 hours of Federal Holidays, and 40 hours of Authorized Absence). Therefore, interns must work 40 hours on site each week and 5 honor hours either on site or off-site. If an intern elects to do his or her honor hours on site, the intern may not engage in any clinical activities. The intern may, instead, write reports, do professional readings, and/or work on their dissertations while at the medical center. For any time worked at the medical center outside of their tour (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), an intern needs to identify an onsite licensed supervisor in the event of an unforeseen or emergency-related

patient contact. Unfortunately, because of VA policy, interns may not earn compensatory time or overtime for working more than 40 hours in a given work week. Interns also may not leave the internship before June 30. Leaving prior to June 30 will result in the intern not receiving the entire stipend amount and may prevent us from being able to certify that the intern completed his/her internship. If a State in which you are interested in becoming licensed has specific hour requirements for internship, interns are responsible for ensuring they do not take more leave that would allow them to become license eligible.

VA Headquarters in Washington, DC, notifies us in January each year of the number of intern positions we will receive for the following internship year. For the current training year, we received six full-time positions, including one designated for the geriatric emphasis. We expect to receive a similar budget for next year. At the time of the update of this brochure, the current stipend is \$26,234 per year paid bi-weekly. Federal income tax and FICA (Social Security) are withheld from interns' checks. The United States Government covers interns for malpractice under the Federal Tort Claims Act.

Training in the Age of COVID-19

Remote Seminars: Seminars may be offered remotely, with presenters and participants at different locations during the seminar transmission. Remote seminars may be offered by Microsoft Teams, WebEx, Skype, Zoom, or other approved platforms, and information will be readily available to participants in advance of the seminar. The expectation is any seminar offered remotely will be attended in their entirety, with Interns actively participating.

Telework: Interns who have completed initial orientation requirements and have demonstrated adequate clinical and administrative skills relative to their desired rotations may be eligible for telework during a public health crisis. Telework is a privilege, requiring adherence to a formal Telework Agreement and completion of all prerequisites for telework. The safety of our Veterans and Interns is always at the forefront of what we do, and while every effort is made to secure telework during any public health crisis, telework itself is not guaranteed and can be limited. It is important for Interns to maintain an online presence and complete clinical and/or administrative duties as effectively as they would in person when they are teleworking. In this way, we can know that our Veterans and our Interns are always safe during any public health crisis.

Unique Circumstances: Reasonable efforts will be made to maintain safety of all Interns throughout their participation in the program. Facility requirements related to face-to-face contact with Veterans and colleagues will be provided to each Intern, and adherence to these requirements is obligatory. Interns who require accommodations for a disability should seek these accommodations via the Human Resources department.

Psychology Training Staff

GEORGE SHORTER, PH.D.

Title: Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS), Mental Health Service Line (MHSL)

School: Auburn University (Graduate)

Internship: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, General Track

License: Alabama – 2003 to present

Duties: Dr. Shorter earned his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Auburn University in 2001. He was appointed as Associate Chief of Staff for Mental Health for North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System (NFSGVHS) in September of 2019, having previously served as Chief of Psychology Service. Dr. Shorter is responsible for all mental health programs and staff in this system, including two hospitals, three large multispecialty outpatient clinics, and nine community-based outpatient clinics. NFSGVHS system measures among the largest VA systems in the nation, serving approximately 140,000 Veterans per year with around 37,000 Veterans utilizing mental health services. Dr. Shorter is a member of the VA's National Psychology Professional Standards Board and the Planning Committee for the VA Psychology Leadership Conference; he has served as Chairperson of the State of Florida's DUI Programs Review Board, Acting National Director of Recovery Services and of Mental Health Intensive Case Management Programs, as President of the Association of VA Psychologist Leaders, and as Acting Director of North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System's Mental Health Service.

JENNIFER W. ADKINS, PH.D.

Title: Chief, Psychology Service / Associate Chief, Psychology Service

Schools: Auburn University (Doctorate and Masters); University of Florida (Undergraduate)

Internship: University of Florida Department of Public Health and Health Professions

Residency: University of Florida Department of Psychiatry

License: Florida – 2007 to present

Duties: Mental Health and Psychology Leadership, Clinical Psychologist, VACO Family Therapy National Trainer and Consultant

Professional Interests: Dr. Adkins' approach is best described as integrative. Her clinical work is most often influenced by behavioral, cognitive behavioral, family systems, and developmental theory. Her professional interests include couple and family therapy, parent training, and interventions for anxiety disorders. Dr. Adkins is a founding member of the VA Lived Experience workgroup: a group of VA healthcare professionals who have a lived experience with mental illness and who work to reduce stigma associated with mental illness through advocacy and education.

ELIZABETH P. DIZNEY, PSY.D.

Title: Director of Psychology Training; Staff Psychologist – Women's Clinic PC-MHI

Schools: Forest Institute of Professional Psychology (Graduate); Missouri State University (Undergraduate)

Internship: Houston Independent School District – Psychology Services

Residency: Harris County Psychiatric Center – Forensic Unit

Licenses: Florida – 2005 to present; Kentucky – 2003 to 2005

Duties: Psychology Training; Clinical Psychologist; Dialectical Behavior Therapy Program

Professional Interests: Psychology training and supervision; eating disorders, obesity, and food addiction; treatment of personality disorders, complex trauma, and PTSD (Military Sexual Trauma); PC-MHI and chronic pain

ANDREA AGUILAR, PSY.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist

School: Regent University (Graduate); University of Florida (Undergraduate)

Internship: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, General Track

Residency: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, Health Psychology Emphasis

License: Florida – 2021 to present

Duties: Psychology Staff, Inpatient Mental Health, Eating Disorder Treatment Team

Professional Interests: Dr. Aguilar primarily practices from a cognitive behavioral approach and often incorporates values-based interventions with the Veteran's she works with. Dr. Aguilar is passionate about how psychological, behavioral, and cultural factors contribute to physical health and illness. She focuses on promoting healthy living with Veterans with a variety of presenting concerns: chronic pain, insomnia, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, obesity, and serious mental illness. She has a strong clinical interest in social justice.

CARRIE AMBROSE, PH.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist

Schools: University of Mississippi (Graduate), Auburn University (Undergraduate)

Internship: Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, Generalist Track

Residency: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, Geropsychology Emphasis

License: Florida – 2015 to present

Duties: Community Living Center Psychologist, Preceptor for Postdoctoral Residency Geropsychology Emphasis, Behavioral Recovery Outreach Psychologist, STAR-VA Behavior Coordinator

Professional Interests: Dr. Ambrose's theoretical orientation is cognitive behavioral. She also utilizes meaning-centered and values-based interventions to serve Veterans residing in our Community Living Center for short-term rehab/skilled nursing care, long-term care, dementia care, and hospice/palliative care. She is also interested in behavioral planning to managing responsive behaviors in those with dementia and served as a STAR-VA training consultant for three years. Other professional interests include the promotion of quality of life for those residing in long-term care through culture transformation.

CAHRYN ANDERSON, PH.D.

Title: Mental Health Clinic Program Manager

School: University of Mississippi (Graduate & Undergraduate)

Internship: Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center

License: Illinois – 2014 to present

Duties: program management; assessment/consultation and psychotherapy services

Professional Interests: substance use disorders, treatment engagement, complex mental health issues

JOHN AUERBACH, PH.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist; Assistant Coordinator, SUD RRTP Programs

School: State University of New York at Buffalo, 1988

Internship: West Haven Veterans Affairs Medical Center

License: Tennessee and Florida – 2014 to present (FL)

Duties: program management; assessment/consultation and psychotherapy services

Professional Interests: Attachment theory, intersubjectivity theory, Mentalization Based Therapy, Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy, performance-based assessment, substance use disorders, personality disorders, PTSD

ENA BEGOVIC, PH.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist, Gainesville PTSD Clinical Team (PCT)

Schools: University of South Florida (Graduate), Eckerd College (Undergraduate)

Internship: Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston, Texas

Residency: Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston, Texas – Focus area: Trauma and Related Anxiety Disorders

License: Virginia – 2021 to present

Duties: Clinical Psychologist

Professional Interests: PTSD and trauma-related disorders; Military Sexual Trauma; evidence-based therapies for PTSD; research and program evaluation

TO'MEISHA EDWARDS, PSY.D.

Title: Psychology Staff

Schools: Georgia Southern University (Undergraduate & Graduate)

Internship: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, General Track

Residency: Atlanta VA Medical Center – Women Veterans Focus Area

Duties: Psychology Staff, Psychology Training

Professional Interests: Women's Wellness, PCMHI, complex trauma, treatment of personality disorders, race-based stress, cultural adaptations to EBP, psychology training and supervision

JULIUS GYLYS, PH.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist

Schools: Ohio University (Graduate), Syracuse University, University of Toledo

Internship: University of Florida, Department of Clinical and Health Psychology

License: Florida – 2000 to present

Duties: Honor Center Psychologist

Professional Interests: Primary Care Behavioral Health, Tobacco Cessation, Mindfulness, Contemplative Psychology, Student Operated Community Free Clinics

JULIE HIRSCH, PH.D.

Title: Geropsychologist

Schools: University of Northern Colorado (Doctorate), University of Northern Colorado (Masters), Arizona State University (Undergraduate)

Internship: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, General Track

Residency: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, Geropsychology Emphasis

License: Florida – 2018 to present

Duties: Clinical Psychologist – Lake City Community Living Center Psychologist

Professional Interests: Geropsychology, Long-Term Care, Short-Term Rehab, Dementia Care and Dementia Related Neuropsychology, Ethics, Hospice and Palliative Care

ERICA HOFFMANN, Ph.D.

Title: Health Behavior Coordinator/Staff Psychologist

Schools: Bowling Green State University (Graduate), University of Wisconsin – Madison (Undergraduate)

Internship: Pittsburgh VAMC, Generalist Track

Residency: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, Substance Use Emphasis

License: Florida – 2014 to Present

Duties: Clinical Psychologist with Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

Professional Interests: Dr. Hoffmann utilizes CBT, Motivational Interviewing, ACT and other mindfulness-based interventions to assist Veterans with health behaviors and whole health. She is active in interdisciplinary care with MOVE! Weight Management, Recreation Therapy, and Bariatric Surgery, among other teams. Dr. Hoffmann also serves as a Tobacco Cessation Lead Clinician and member of the Transgender/LGB Workgroup.

KEVIN M. LANCER, PH.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist; Pain Psychologist

Schools: University of Nevada, Las Vegas (Masters and Doctorate); Pepperdine University (Masters)

Internship: Counseling and Psychological Services Student Health and Medical Center, Lincoln, NE

Residency: Scott & White Medical Center, Temple Texas; VA Medical Center, Temple Texas. Focus on Chronic Illness, Stress in Dementia Caregivers, and PTSD

License: Florida – 2008 to present

Professional Interests: Psychotherapy; primary care clinical and health psychology; psychoneuroimmunology; geropsychology; performance enhancement

VALERIE LAROCCO, PSY.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist

Schools: University of Indianapolis (Graduate), Ohio Wesleyan (Undergraduate)

Internship: Cincinnati VAMC, PTSD Track

License(s): Florida – 2011 to present

Duties: Clinical Psychologist – PTSD Clinical Team (PCT)

Professional Interests: Dr. LaRocco practices from a primarily cognitive-behavioral orientation with emphasis on evidence-based psychotherapies for PTSD and associated conditions. Additional areas of interest include chronic pain, insomnia, and provider/Veteran resources.

JULIE M. LISZKA, PH.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist

School: New Mexico State University (Graduate)

Internship: Western New York Veterans Healthcare System, General Track

License: New York – 2006 to present

Duties: Dr. Liszka is the PTSD Program Manager for North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System. She has worked as a PTSD treatment provider in both residential and outpatient settings. She currently serves as a Cognitive Processing Therapy Regional Trainer and a VISN 08 PTSD Mentor.

Professional Interests: PTSD, Evidence Based Therapies for PTSD

AIXA LONG, PSY.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist

School: American School of Professional Psychology at Argosy University (graduate)

Internship: Florida Department of Corrections

Residency: VA Caribbean Healthcare System, Puerto Rico

License: Florida – 2016 to present

Duties: PTSD Clinical Team Coordinator, The Villages OPC; Staff Psychologist – Eating Disorder treatment team

Professional Interests: Implementation of the trauma-recovery approach from the biopsychosocial model, considering the impact of trauma on the mind, body, and social connection. Clinical interest include treatment of Complex trauma, Military Sexual Trauma, and transgenerational trauma. Dr. Long has worked in implementing trauma-informed care in correctional settings supporting integrated programming to ensure safety and recovery in women's correctional facilities. Other clinical interests include eating disorders, women's health psychology, and the active role of psychologists in the fight for social justice.

MERLE MILLER, PH.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist

Schools: University of Oklahoma (Doctorate); University of Memphis (Master's); Missouri State (Undergraduate)

Internship: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System – Geropsychology Track

License: Florida – 2010 to present

Duties: Clinical Psychologist – Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC)

Professional Interests: Geropsychology, Behavioral Management related to dementia, End of Life Existential Issues

ERIKA J. MOLINA-VERGARA, PSY.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist

Schools: Carlos Albizu University, San Juan Campus (Doctorate)

Internship: First Hospital Panamericano (Inpatient/Outpatient Clinics)

License: Puerto Rico – 2008 to present; Florida – 2019 to present

Duties: Dr. Molina is the new SUD/ PTSD Clinical Psychologist at the VA Hospital in Lake City. She was previously a Licensed Independent Practitioner (LIP) for the Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program (SARP) at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola. She also had two private practice locations in Puerto Rico.

Professional Interests: Substance Use Disorders, Recovery Model

CARLY OSTROM, PH.D.

Title: Geropsychologist

Schools: Gallaudet University (Doctorate), Minnesota State University Mankato (Masters), St. Catherine's University (Undergraduate)

Internship: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, Geropsychology Track

Residency: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, Geropsychology Emphasis

License: Florida – 2016 to present

Duties: Clinical Psychologist – Gainesville Community Living Center and Palliative Care Consult Team

Professional Interests: Geropsychology, Dementia, Hospice and Palliative Care, Deafness, American Sign Language

JASON PICKREN, PSY.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist

School: Nova Southeastern University (Graduate)

Internship: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, General Track

Residency: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, SUD Emphasis

License: Florida – 2009 to present

Duties: Dr. Pickren is a primary SUD preceptor. He serves as an officer in the U.S. Army National Guard and has recently rejoined us after a year-long deployment to Kuwait. His pre-deployment words to fellow SUD coworkers gives a sense of his spirit and commitment: “Our cause is righteous so our faith can be shaken but not broken.”

Professional Interests: Substance Use Disorders, Recovery Model

KIMBERLY SHAW, PH.D.

Title: Clinical Health Psychologist

Graduate Program: University of Miami: Pediatric Health, Clinical Child and Applied Developmental Psychology (Graduate)

Internship: Rush-Presbyterian St. Luke’s Medical Center

Fellowship: University of Miami, Adolescent Health

License: Florida – 1990 to present

Professional Interests: Dr. Shaw’s foundational clinical model is the integration of Interpersonal Neurobiology and Neuro-cardiology/Polyvagal Theory, i.e. the application of the modern neuroscience of relationships to enhancing emotional and physical wellness. She has a strong passion for developmentally based clinical supervision from this comprehensive biopsychosocial, evidence-based model. The major focus of her clinical work is trauma-informed and trauma-responsive couples and family intervention including Cognitive-Behavioral Conjoint Therapy for PTSD and Parent-Infant psychotherapy. Other interests include Medical Traumatic Stress, Late-Onset Stress Symptomatology, Gero-Psychology and Palliative Care.

VALERIE SHORTER, PH.D.

Title: Medical Psychologist

Schools: Ohio University (Graduate); University of Delaware (Undergraduate)

Internship: University of Florida, Clinical and Health Psychology, Medical Psychology track

Residency: University of Florida, Clinical and Health Psychology, Transplant Psychology

License: Florida – 2000 to present

Duties: Clinical Psychologist, Medical Psychology Supervisor, Health Psychology Residency Preceptor

Professional Interests: Health Psychology; Transplant Psychology; Rehabilitation Psychology

MICHELE SHRINER, PH.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist

School: Florida State University (Graduate)

Internship: Southern Louisiana Internship Consortium (SLIC)

Residency: Psychological Services of St. Augustine

License: Florida – 2000 to present

Duties: SATT Psychologist

Professional Interests: Substance Use Disorders, Military Sexual Trauma

CHRISTOPHER N. SOZDA, PH.D., ABPP-CN

Title: Neuropsychologist

Schools: University of Florida (Graduate), University of Pittsburgh (Undergraduate)

Internship: VA Northern California Healthcare System (Clinical Psychology - Neuropsychology Track)

Residency: VA Northern California Healthcare System (Clinical Neuropsychology)

License: Florida – 2014 to present

Duties: Clinical Neuropsychologist, Mental Health Service Line

Professional Interests: Dr. Sozda has been designated as Board Certified in Clinical Neuropsychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology. His clinical interests include assessment of dementias, stroke/cerebrovascular disease, movement disorders, and traumatic brain injuries.

KENDRA L. THORNE, PH.D.

Title: PTSD Clinical Team (PCT) Staff Psychologist – Sergeant Ernest I. “Boots” Thomas VA Clinic, Tallahassee, Florida

Schools: Florida State University (Ph.D.), West Virginia University (Masters and Undergraduate)

Internship: James H. Quillen VA Medical Center

Residency: James H. Quillen VA Medical Center

License: West Virginia – 2020 to present

Duties: Clinical duties within the PCT; neuropsychological testing/screening for the Tallahassee General Mental Health Clinic; didactic training staff for the James H. Quillen VAMC Psychology Internship Program; external liaison for the Tallahassee Vet Center

Professional Interests: Rural mental healthcare acceptability; PTSD among Appalachian Veterans; interactions between rurality, suicidality, and trauma; evidence-based therapies for PTSD

LAUREN TIDWELL, PSY.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist, PCT Clinical Coordinator

School: Nova Southeastern University (Graduate)

Internship: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, General Track

Residency: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, SUD Emphasis

License: Florida – 2020 to present

Duties: Clinical Psychologist; PCT Clinical Coordinator; Dialectical Behavior Therapy Program

Professional Interests: Substance Use Disorders, Long Term Mental Illness, Stigma, Suicide, Diversity, Cultural Humility, Multicultural Psychology, Therapeutic Assessment

JUSTIN TRAPANI, PSY.D.

Title: Clinical Psychologist; Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (PRRTP)

Schools: Nova Southeastern (Graduate), Adelphi University (Graduate), SUNY Oneonta (Undergraduate)

Internship: South Florida State Hospital – Wellpath Recovery Solutions

Residency: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, SUD Emphasis

License: Florida – 2022 to present

Duties: Psychology Training; Clinical Psychologist; Substance Abuse Treatment Team (SATT)

Professional Interests: Psychology training and supervision, substance use disorders, personality disorders, long-term mental illness (LTMI), PTSD, Attachment Therapy, Mentalization Based Therapy

HEATHER TREE, PH.D.

Title: Neuropsychologist

Schools: The University of Kansas (Doctorate), Central Missouri State University (Masters), Central Missouri State University (Undergraduate)

Internship: Dwight D. Eisenhower VA Medical Center – Generalist Track

Residency: The University of Michigan/Ann Arbor VA Medical Center - Neuropsychology

License: Kansas – 2013 to present

Duties: Clinical Psychologist – Neuropsychology Service

Professional Interests: Her clinical interests include traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis, cognitive rehabilitation in severe mental illness and neuropsychological assessment practices. Interests also include the role of hope, optimism, and social support in coping and recovery of various medical conditions. She also serves as a member on the interdisciplinary teams for caregiver support and traumatic brain injury.

AMY VOLTMER, PSY.D.

Title: Staff Psychologist

School: Regent University (Graduate)

Internship: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, General Track

Residency: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, SUD Emphasis

License: Florida – 2019 to present

Duties: Clinical Psychologist, PRRC & Honor Center; Dialectical Behavior Therapy Program

Professional Interests: Dr. Voltmer's theoretical orientation is an integration of attachment/interpersonal and third-wave cognitive-behavioral theories. She utilizes DBT, MI, ACT, and Time-Limited Psychodynamic Therapy modalities within a framework of cultural humility to address complex trauma, substance use disorders, severe mental illness, and personality disorders. She also has a strong clinical interest in providing comprehensive psychological assessment to Veterans with complex presentations. Research interests include implicit bias, intersectionality, and cross-cultural research. Dr. Voltmer serves as the committee chair of the Community Reintegration and Recovery Service Line's Education Committee, and also serves on the Psychology Diversity Committee.

KERRY WAGNER-BELLOCCHIO, PSYD

Title: Staff Psychologist

Schools: Immaculata University (Doctorate), The State University of New York at Buffalo (Masters, M.S.W), The State University of New York College at Fredonia (Undergraduate)

Internship: Miami VA Health Care System, Psychiatry-General Track

Residency: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, PTSD/TBI Emphasis

License: Florida – 2021 to present

Duties: Inpatient Mental Health; Dialectical Behavior Therapy Program

Professional Interests: Dr. Wagner considers herself to be a third wave Cognitive Behavioral practitioner who conceptualizes from a humanistic, relational and systems perspective. On the inpatient unit, she often integrates short-term evidence based practices (CBT, ACT, DBT, MI) with individuals who have been diagnosed with a variety of psychological disorders including, but not limited to depression/other mood disorders, anxiety, substance use disorders, schizophrenia spectrum, PTSD, personality disorders and chronic suicidality. She also has a strong clinical interest in working with Veterans who have PTSD/complex trauma, co-occurring substance use and personality disorders in an outpatient setting.

JOHN B WILLIAMSON, PHD, ABPP-CN

Title: Research Psychologist

Schools: Virginia Polytechnic and State University (Doctorate, Masters); The Florida State University (Undergraduate)

Internship: University of Chicago, Department of Psychiatry, Neuropsychology Track

Residency: University of Illinois, Chicago, Neuropsychology, Autonomic Neuroscience

License: Florida – 2011 to present

Academic Affiliate: Assistant professor of Psychiatry, Neuroscience, and Clinical and Health Psychology

Duties: Principal investigator, research (various); lead, Cognitive Function Initiative Brain Rehabilitation Research Center

Professional Interests: Dr. Williamson has worked to both understand mechanism of brain dysfunction in disorders such as TBI, PTSD, and cerebrovascular disease; and to develop applied solutions to the problems that most impact quality of life in individuals that struggle with these issues. He is interested in the role of central and peripheral autonomic nervous system interactions in modifying or regulating brain states and behavioral output. He has VA and DOD funding to understand the mechanistic contribution of white matter injuries in key central autonomic inputs from traumatic brain injury and manifestation of symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, biomarkers (blood) of TBI subphenotypic outcomes; as well as NIH, McKnight Brain Foundation, and VA funding on intervention developments in cognitive dysfunction associated with healthy aging, Alzheimer's disease, sleep disruption, and PTSD.

Trainees

2022 – 2023 Internship Class

Florida Institute of Technology – Clinical – Psy.D.

Florida Institute of Technology – Clinical – Psy.D.

Georgia Southern University – Clinical – Psy.D.

University of Notre Dame – Clinical – Ph.D.

Florida Institute of Technology – Clinical – Psy.D.

The Chicago School of Professional Psychology – DC Campus – Clinical – Psy.D.

2021 – 2022 Internship Class

Nova Southeastern University – Clinical – Psy.D.
Nova Southeastern University – Clinician and School – Psy.D.
Florida Institute of Technology – Clinical – Psy.D.
Palo Alto University – Clinical – Ph.D.
Kene University – Clinical and School – Psy.D.
Fuller Theological Seminary – Clinical – Ph.D.

2020 – 2021 Internship Class

Regent University – Clinical – Psy.D.
Regent University – Clinical – Psy.D.
Nova Southeastern University – Clinical – Psy.D.
Georgia Southern University – Clinical – Psy.D.
Adler University – Clinical – Psy.D.
Gallaudet University – Clinical – Ph.D.

2019 – 2020 Internship Class

Regent University – Clinical – Psy.D.
Carlos Albizu University – San Juan – Clinical – Ph.D.
Nova Southeastern University – Clinical – Psy.D.
University of Georgia – Counseling – Ph.D.
University of Florida – Counseling – Ph.D.
University of Florida – Counseling – Ph.D.

2018 – 2019 Internship Class

Pepperdine University
Florida State University
Spaulding University
Nova Southeastern
Carlos Albizu University
University of Maryland at College Park

2017-2018 Internship Class

Colorado State University
Florida Institute of Technology
Florida State University
Florida State University
The Virginia Consortium Program in Clinical Psychology
Regent University

2016-2017 Internship Class

University of Northern Colorado
Nova Southeastern University
University of Florida
University of Kentucky
University of Florida
Florida Institute of Technology

2015-2016 Internship Class

University of Alabama
Nova Southeastern University
University of Central Florida
Spalding University
Florida Institute of Technology
Georgia Southern University

2014-2015 Internship Class

Wichita State University
Regent University
University of Georgia
University of Tennessee
Texas Tech University
Jackson State University

2013-2014 Internship Class

University of Alabama
Alliant University
Gallaudet University
University of Kansas
Pacific Graduate School of Psychology
Regent University

2012-2013 Internship Class

University Alabama at Birmingham
University of Memphis
Jackson State University
University of Kentucky

2011- 2012 Internship Class

University of Florida
Nova Southeastern University
Argosy University, Atlanta
Florida Institute of Technology

2010-2011 Internship Class

Clark University
Florida Institute of Technology
University of Nevada, Reno
Tennessee State University

2009-2010 Internship Class

Nova Southeastern University
University of Central Florida
University of North Texas
Virginia Consortium Program in Clinical Psychology

2008-2009 Internship Class

University of Florida
University of Louisville
University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa

2007-2008 Internship Class

Argosy University, Phoenix
Fielding Institute
Carlos Albizu University
University of Oklahoma

2006-2007 Internship Class

West Virginia University
Nova Southeastern University
Indiana State University
Argosy University, Phoenix

2005-2006 Internship Class

Florida Institute of Technology
Duke University
Texas Tech University
Nova Southeastern University

2004-2005 Internship Class

Argosy University, Phoenix
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
University of Georgia
Washington State University

2003-2004 Internship Class

Indiana State University
University of North Dakota
Nova Southeastern University
Nova Southeastern University
University of Southern Mississippi

2002-2003 Internship Class

University of Georgia
University of Mississippi
Nova Southeastern University
Chicago School of Professional Psychology
University of Southern Mississippi

2001-2002 Internship Class

University of Florida
St. Louis University
Miami University
University of Southern Mississippi
Virginia Tech

NF/SG VHS Internship Admissions, Support, and Initial Placement Data

Date Program Tables are updated: August 31, 2022

Program Disclosures

Does the program or institution require students, trainees, and/or staff (faculty) to comply with specific policies or practices related to the institution's affiliation or purpose? Such policies or practices may include, but are not limited to, admissions, hiring, retention policies, and/or requirements for completion that express mission and values?	<p style="text-align: right;"><u> X </u> Yes</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u> </u> No</p>
If yes, provide website link (or content from brochure) where this specific information is presented:	
Psychology Training Program VA North Florida Health Care Veterans Affairs	
Briefly describe in narrative form important information to assist potential applicants in assessing their likely fit with your program. This description must be consistent with the program's policies on intern selection and practicum and academic preparation requirements:	

What sets our training program apart is our trauma-informed and trauma-responsive perspective, which is intended to inform general clinical work and continued development of competencies. Our program embraces the concepts of measurement-based care and evidenced-based treatment and assessment, and also recognizes there is a difference between empirically standardized treatment and evidenced-based treatment. Our training opportunities are designed to provide opportunities to integrate the “heart and head” of psychology practice; an integration we believe leads to improved clinical outcomes, better insight into psychological processes that lead to change, and increased satisfaction with clinical work. The internship year is critical in transitioning trainees from the sprint pace of undergraduate and graduate programs, to the marathon pace of practicing psychology. We emphasize work-life balance in our program because we believe being a psychologist is what you do and not who you are, although we do realize who you are does inform what you do. Our brochure provides information for you; however, this information does not describe the heart of our program or our staff, which is the truly special part of our program.

Does the program require that applicants have received a minimum number of hours of the following at time of application? If Yes, indicate how many:

Total Direct Contact Intervention Hours	Yes	Amount: 520 w/assessment hours
Total Direct Contact Assessment Hours	Yes	Amount: 520 w/intervention hours

Describe any other required minimum criteria used to screen applicants:

Dissertation Proposal Successfully Defended; a minimum of 5 completed psychological assessments; US Citizenship; APA-accredited internships to U.S. citizens pursuing a doctoral degree in clinical or counseling psychology from an APA, CPA, or PCASAS accredited institution

Financial and Other Benefit Support for Upcoming Training Year*

Annual Stipend/Salary for Full-time Interns	\$26,234	
Annual Stipend/Salary for Half-time Interns	n/a	
Program provides access to medical insurance for intern?	Yes	
If access to medical insurance is provided:		
Trainee contribution to cost required?	Yes	
Coverage of family member(s) available?	Yes	
Coverage of legally married partner available?	Yes	
Coverage of domestic partner available?	Yes	
Hours of Annual Paid Personal Time Off (PTO and/or Vacation)	approx. 104	
Hours of Annual Paid Sick Leave	approx. 104	
In the event of medical conditions and/or family needs that require extended leave, does the program allow reasonable unpaid leave to interns/residents in excess of personal time off and sick leave?	Yes	

Other Benefits (please describe): 5 days of Authorized Absence (AA) for dissertation defense or for workshops and presentations with advanced supervisory approval; 88 hours of Federal Holidays

*Note. Programs are not required by the Commission on Accreditation to provide all benefits listed in this table

Initial Post-Internship Positions

(Provide an Aggregated Tally for the Preceding 3 Cohorts)

	2019-2022	
Total # of interns who were in the 3 cohorts	17	
Total # of interns who did not seek employment because they returned to their doctoral program/are completing doctoral degree	0	
	PD	EP
Community mental health center		
Federally qualified health center		
Independent primary care facility/clinic		
University counseling center		
Veterans Affairs medical center	8	7
Military health center		
Academic health center		
Other medical center or hospital	1	
Psychiatric hospital		
Academic university/department	1	
Community college or other teaching setting		
Independent research institution		
Correctional facility		
School district/system		
Independent practice setting		
Not currently employed		
Changed to another field		
Other		
Unknown		

Note: "PD" = Post-doctoral residency position; "EP" = Employed Position. Each individual represented in this table should be counted only one time. For former trainees working in more than one setting, select the setting that represents their primary position.



Local Information

The North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System is headquartered at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center in Gainesville and is located adjacent to the University of Florida, an institution of more than 35,000 students.

The North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System is affiliated with the J. Hillis Miller Health Center at the University of Florida, located directly across the street. This complex consists of the Shands Teaching Hospital and the Colleges of Dentistry, Health Professions, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Veterinary Medicine. All VA programs are administered by the Director, Associate Director, and Chief of Staff and are coordinated jointly with the University of Florida's Vice President for Health Affairs and the appropriate colleges and faculty.

The Malcom Randall VA Medical Center is situated among the gentle hills of North Central Florida in a scenic, tree-canopied community of 100,000 residents. Located midway between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, Gainesville has a relatively mild climate suitable for year-round enjoyment of sports and its varied lakes and recreation facilities. Interestingly, Gainesville has more bicycle paths than any other city in the United States. Gainesville is serviced by air, bus, and train lines. Gulf- and Atlantic-coast attractions are within a two-hour drive of the medical center. These include Orlando attractions, such as Disney World, Universal Studios, and Sea World. Also nearby are Busch Gardens and Cypress Gardens. The larger metropolitan areas of Tampa, St. Petersburg, Orlando, and Jacksonville are equally accessible. Culturally, Gainesville is enhanced by the University of Florida and the Center for the Performing Arts. Entertainers who have performed in Gainesville recently have run the gamut

from Matchbox Twenty, Lenny Kravitz, Smashmouth, and the Rolling Stones to Ray Romano, Elton John, and Bill Cosby to nationally renowned symphonies and Broadway plays. Gainesville also supports a nationally known art festival, a community band, a civic chorus, the University symphony, and dance groups. The Florida Museum of Natural History, the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, and a number of excellent theater groups which includes the Hippodrome State Theater provide considerable diversity.

Additional information regarding eligibility requirements (with hyperlinks)

- Trainees receive term employee appointments and must meet eligibility requirements for appointment as outlined in VA Handbook 5005 Staffing, Part II, Section B. Appointment Requirements and Determinations. https://www.va.gov/vapubs/viewPublication.asp?Pub_ID=646&FType=2
- Selective Service website where the requirements, benefits and penalties of registering vs. not registering are outlined: <https://www.sss.gov/Registration/Why-Register/Benefits-and-Penalties>

Additional information specific suitability information from Title 5 (referenced in VHA Handbook 5005):

(b) Specific factors. In determining whether a person is suitable for Federal employment, only the following factors will be considered a basis for finding a person unsuitable and taking a suitability action:

- (1) Misconduct or negligence in employment;
- (2) Criminal or dishonest conduct;
- (3) Material, intentional false statement, or deception or fraud in examination or appointment;
- (4) Refusal to furnish testimony as required by § 5.4 of this chapter;
- (5) Alcohol abuse, without evidence of substantial rehabilitation, of a nature and duration that suggests that the applicant or appointee would be prevented from performing the duties of the position in question, or would constitute a direct threat to the property or safety of the applicant or appointee or others;
- (6) Illegal use of narcotics, drugs, or other controlled substances without evidence of substantial rehabilitation;
- (7) Knowing and willful engagement in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force; and
- (8) Any statutory or regulatory bar which prevents the lawful employment of the person involved in the position in question.

(c) Additional considerations. OPM and agencies must consider any of the following additional considerations to the extent OPM or the relevant agency, in its sole discretion, deems any of them pertinent to the individual case:

- (1) The nature of the position for which the person is applying or in which the person is employed;
- (2) The nature and seriousness of the conduct;

- (3) The circumstances surrounding the conduct;
 - (4) The recency of the conduct;
 - (5) The age of the person involved at the time of the conduct;
 - (6) Contributing societal conditions; and
 - (7) The absence or presence of rehabilitation or efforts toward rehabilitation.
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Correspondence

For additional information, please contact:

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